

**Teacher Leadership: Perceptions of Teachers, Administrators, and Teacher Leaders
in an Urban District Regarding Effective Practice and the Kansas Teacher Leader
Standards**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders from one district, regarding the performance skills outlined in the Kansas teacher leader standards that most significantly contribute to the effectiveness of individuals working as teacher leaders. There was also an examination of the level of alignment between the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders regarding the performance skills most significantly contributing to effectiveness (KSDE, n.d., p. 1-2). It was conducted in a Kansas urban school district with strong roots in collaborative leadership.

This study utilized survey research. The survey was in two parts: demographics and perceptions of teacher leader effectiveness. The first eight perception questions were derived from the Kansas teacher leader standards. Data were collected electronically through Survey Monkey, a web-based survey tool. Compiled data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using SPSS version 19.0. The responses from particular groups for each survey question associated with the eight Kansas teacher leader standards were tested with one sample *t* tests. A one factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare the responses from teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders, for each survey question associated with the eight standards. The final survey question was open-ended.

The standards found to contribute most significantly to perceptions of effective teacher leader practice were most closely connected with teacher practice and student achievement. The standards found to be less significant contributors to effective practice were associated with families, other stakeholders, or action research. The two strongest

themes from the open ended question were the importance of the professional knowledge base of a teacher leader and the ability to establish professional relationships. The results of this research suggest that district leaders should examine teacher leader support systems to ensure that teacher leaders understand adult learning theories, can provide effective feedback following an observation, are able to provide effective professional development support, are prepared to design and support collaborative teams, and can help teachers utilize assessments effectively.

Dedication

I am dedicating this study to two very important men in my life.

To my husband, whose endless love provided me the support I needed. He spent many hours doing the laundry, cleaning, grocery shopping, and cooking to free up my time for this project. He was always ready with an encouraging word whenever I was ready to throw in the towel. Thank you just doesn't seem adequate.

To my father, who was taken from us after an exhaustive battle with cancer during the time I worked on this project. His example of dedication to quality of life through a focus on family and high quality work has been an exemplary model for me my whole life.

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I would like to thank family, friends and colleagues who believed I was capable of doing this and supported me through the process. Thank you for the constant encouragement!

To mom, you have been a pillar of strength, always willing to listen to my struggles and provide positive, hopeful feedback. Thank you for your support and for the editing work.

To my \$35,000 friend, colleague and cohort member, you have supported me so much through the writing process, endlessly listening to my struggles and always coming up with ideas for me to take away. Thank you for enduring this with me.

To Peg Waterman and Dr. Harold Frye, thank you for your constant input and feedback. I know I communicated my frustration more than once, but you both always responded calmly and with reassurance. I never could have done this without you.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Demands of school leadership have changed over the past several decades. No longer is a school leader simply a manager. Today's school leaders are seeking to improve educational opportunities for students in highly scrutinized contexts. "No Child Left Behind (NCLB) brought sweeping changes to the 37-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and thrust the nation's educators, schools, and school districts into a new world of federal educational leadership" (Hess & Petrilli, 2004, p. 13). According to Chapman (2007), the expected performance standards in NCLB created a sense of urgency among school leaders to meet the requirements of making adequate yearly progress (AYP) status on statewide tests in a variety of disaggregated categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, attendance, student mobility, special education, limited English proficiency, qualifications of teachers, and more (p.26). Pressure to increase test scores mounted and the expectations of school leaders became the concern of the general public. State and district leaders began to realize change needed to occur, especially in districts with achievement gaps (Berg, Miller & Souvanna, 2011). Shared leadership has become more prevalent in response to current pressures. "Whether we call it distributed leadership, collaborative leadership, or shared leadership, the ideal arrangement encourages every adult in the school to be a leader" (Donaldson, 2007, p. 29). Schools need leadership, and school leaders need to foster leadership in others.

Teacher effectiveness has also become a focus for leaders hoping to improve performance levels of students. In Schmoker's (2006) work, he found that "the single

greatest determinant of learning is not socioeconomic factors or funding levels. It is instruction” (p. 7). This claim is supported by Marzano (2003), who identified numerous studies demonstrating the impact of effective instruction. His meta-analysis findings indicate “the most effective teachers produced gains of about 53 percentage points in student achievement over one year, whereas the least effective teachers produced achievement gains of about 14 percentage points over one year” (p. 27). Additional support for this line of thinking came from Shanahan (2003), in his review of the National Reading Panel report, wherein he stated, “the main conclusion gained from the work of the panel is teaching matters” (p. 648).

Teaching is a challenging profession, and one in which growth is necessary. Teachers are expected to have current knowledge of best practice methods and strategies to use in their classrooms. In an effort to support teacher development and growth, administrators have identified effective teachers within their buildings to act as leaders supporting the learning and development of their colleagues. “The move toward teacher leadership is one answer to the dilemma of school leadership. Nurturing teacher leaders helps districts strengthen school leadership, aids in teacher retention, and sustains school reform” (Hohenbrink, Stauffer, Zigler, & Uhlenhake, 2011, p. 42). Teacher leadership looks different from place to place; but its primary function is similar.

To increase student achievement, schools and districts are hiring teachers as leaders to support peers in improving teaching and learning. Their roles are variously called coach, school-based staff developer, instructional specialist, or program facilitator. These new school leaders are respected as competent

teachers, have demonstrated their success with students, and have credibility with both the school's principal and staff. (Killion, 2007, p. 11)

Developing these leaders requires joint responsibility among teachers, principals and district leaders (Ballek, O'Rourke, Provenzano, & Bellamy, 2005). Teachers working in leadership positions are ideally suited for supporting the long-term goals of a school. They understand the importance of the work that needs to be done.

Conceptual Framework and Background

Teacher leadership is gaining recognition as a vital part of the education system, and progress is being made on a number of fronts to define the role of a teacher leader. The Teacher Leader Exploratory Consortium (TLEC), a national organization, was formed to define the role of teacher leadership and create standards to formalize the defined expectations of teacher leaders (n.d., p. 2). The consortium included representatives from ten professional educational organizations and eleven state agencies. The representatives were current teacher leaders, principals and superintendents from nine school districts, and seven institutions of higher education (TLEC n.d., p.17). They released new national teacher leader standard domains (see Appendix A) in 2011 (TLEC, n.d., p. 33).

State departments of education and other professional organizations have begun to get involved in creating licensing and certification programs for teacher leaders. Optional teacher leader endorsements are available in Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky and Louisiana (TLEC, n.d., p.25). States such as Arkansas, California, Ohio and Connecticut are establishing criteria for credentialing teacher leaders (TLEC, n.d., p. 25). The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) established a five state consortium

called KODAK (Kentucky, Ohio, Delaware, Alabama and Kansas) to develop a university leadership curriculum (TLEC, n.d., p. 15). The 2008 Teaching in Kansas Commission (TKC), created by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), developed teacher leader standards for the state of Kansas (see Appendix B) as well as the nation's first performance evaluation for teacher leadership licensure (KSDE). The new certification programs were designed to provide support for individuals working in the teacher leader role and to offer formalized recognition for certified or licensed teacher leaders.

In the state of Kansas, teacher leader standards outline optimal performance for teacher leaders (KSDE, n.d., pp. 1-2). According to the eight standards, teacher leaders should be able to apply strategies of adult learning, demonstrate expertise in observational skills, provide quality feedback, and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated, and differentiated professional development based on student and teacher needs. In addition, teacher leaders should assist colleagues as they collaborate and interact with families, conduct action research, develop collaborative teams and identify opportunities for educational improvement within and beyond the school. They should work collaboratively with teachers to use and interpret multiple assessments and all available data to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning (KSDE, n.d., pp. 1-2).

This study took place in an urban school district with strong roots in collaborative leadership located in Kansas. The district has been named District XYZ for the purposes of this study. Before giving permission to collect data, the district required anonymity for the district and any personnel involved. The following tables outline demographic and

performance data on the State Assessment from the 2004 – 2005 school year to the 2010 – 2011 school year. Students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 or 10 are tested yearly in both reading and math. The district maintained an approximate enrollment of 20,000 students during this period of time.

Table 1 depicts the ethnic make-up of the district. The percentage of African American and White populations decreased during this time period, while the percentage of Hispanic populations increased. The Other category combines data from students of Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Multi-Racial, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander categories of ethnicity. This population remained somewhat stable until the 2010-2011 school year, when it increased.

Table 1

District Race/ Ethnicity

	2004 - 2005	2006 - 2007	2008 - 2009	2010 - 2011
African American	46.6%	44.4%	42.1%	37.9%
Hispanic	30.4%	34.9%	38.1%	41.7%
White ^a	19.2%	17.1%	15.9%	14.4%
Other	3.8%	3.6%	3.9%	6.0%

Note. Adapted from *Kansas State Department of Education District Report Card*, by KSDE, 2010. ^aColor label per KSDE. Available at [http://ksde.org/rcard/district.aspx?\[District XYZ\]](http://ksde.org/rcard/district.aspx?[District XYZ]).

Table 2 depicts the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch, the Socio-Economic Status indicator used to identify students as Economically Disadvantaged (ED) or Non Economically Disadvantaged (Non ED). During this time

period the percentage of students in the ED category increased and the Non ED decreased.

Table 2

Economically Disadvantaged Students

	2004 - 2005	2006 - 2007	2008 - 2009	2010 - 2011
ED	72.9%	76.5%	83.8. 2%	87.9%
Non ED	27.1%	23.5%	16.2%	12.1%

Note. Adapted from *Kansas State Department of Education District Report Card*, by KSDE, 2010. Available at [http://ksde.org/rcard/district.aspx?\[District XYZ\]](http://ksde.org/rcard/district.aspx?[District XYZ]).

Table 3 depicts the percentage of students scoring at or above the state proficiency goal in Reading and Math from 2004 to 2011. From the 2004 – 2005 school year to the 2006 -2007 school year, the percent of district XYZ students achieving proficiency in reading dipped, but rose in subsequent years. The percentage of students scoring at or above the state proficiency goal has increased in both subjects during this time period.

Table 3

District Performance – Percentage Proficient and Above State Goal

	2004 - 2005	2006 - 2007	2008 - 2009	2010 - 2011
Reading	56. 1%	51.9%	62.2%	67.1%
Math	40.7%	50.9%	63.7%	68.5%

Note. Adapted from *Kansas State Department of Education District Report Card*, by KSDE, 2010. Available at [http://ksde.org/rcard/district.aspx?\[District XYZ\]](http://ksde.org/rcard/district.aspx?[District XYZ]).

Table 4 depicts the percentage of students scoring at or above the state proficiency goal on the state assessments by student groups by ethnicity in Reading from

2004 to 2011. This table shows gaps in achievement between student groups, most significantly between the white groups and all other student groups by ethnicity. The gap between the White student group and the African American student group decreased during this time period from a 16.9% gap to an 8.8% gap. The gap between the White student group and the Hispanic student group increased from 4.2% in 2005 to 16.5% in 2007, with a decrease in subsequent years. The gap between the White student group and the Other student group followed the same pattern as the White and Hispanic. There was an increase between 2005 and 2007, with a subsequent decrease.

Table 4

District Performance – Percentage Proficient and Above State Goal in Reading by Student Groups

	2004 - 2005	2006 - 2007	2008 - 2009	2010 - 2011
African American	49.2%	51.6%	60.1%	65.3%
Hispanic	61.9%	48.9%	60.7%	67.0%
White ^a	66.1%	65.4%	71.3%	74.1%
Other	47.2%	41.7%	56.7%	62.0%

Note. Adapted from *Kansas State Department of Education District Report Card*, by KSDE, 2010. ^aColor label per KSDE. Available at [http://ksde.org/rcard/district.aspx?\[District XYZ\]](http://ksde.org/rcard/district.aspx?[District XYZ]).

As evidenced in Table 4, District XYZ is a district with an achievement gap, which occurs when one student group consistently achieves higher scores than another student groups.

Table 5 shows the percentage of students scoring at or above the state proficiency goal on the state assessments by student groups in Math from 2004 to 2011. This table also shows gaps in achievement between student groups, most significantly between the white group and all other student groups. Table 5 shows achievement gaps similar to those shown in Table 4, with some differences. The gap between the White student group and the African American student group decreased during this time period from an 18.6% gap to a 10.6% gap. The gap between the White student group and the Hispanic student group decreased from a 9.8% gap in 2005 to a 2.4% gap in 2011, which was consistently smaller than the gap between the White student group and the African American student group. The gap between the White student group and the Other student group increased between the 2004 – 2005 school year and the 2006 – 2007 school year, with a subsequent decrease.

Table 5

District Performance – Percentage Proficient and Above State Goal in Math by Student Groups

	2004 - 2005	2006 - 2007	2008 - 2009	2010 - 2011
African American	34.4%	47.5%	58.0%	62.9%
Hispanic	43.2%	53.0%	66.1%	71.3%
White ^a	53.0%	61.1%	71.4%	73.7%
Other	32.2%	61.2%	59.6%	66.1%

Note. Adapted from *Kansas State Department of Education District Report Card*, by KSDE, 2010. ^aColor label per KSDE. Available at [http://ksde.org/rcard/district.aspx?\[District XYZ\]](http://ksde.org/rcard/district.aspx?[District XYZ]).

As one avenue of response to the gap in performance between student groups, the district has employed teachers in leadership roles. In the words of a district administrator,

The role was created to support the research that states the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher. Thus, improving the effectiveness of teachers is an immediate and clear finding to increasing student achievement.

Student achievement has improved significantly over the last 10 years. (District Official A, personal communication, November 28, 2011)

An increase in student achievement by students in all ethnic groups during the ten years teachers have worked in leadership roles has supported the continuation of this role in District XYZ. Killion (2007) found that most teacher leader positions are supported locally, and that districts often decide to place coaches in schools not meeting AYP (p. 11). The idea is to support the teachers as an intervention with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement. Since 2002, District XYZ has provided on-site continuous support in all schools for teachers in the form of teacher leaders as one aspect of the goal to improve student achievement and reduce the achievement gap throughout the district (District Official A, personal communication, November 28, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

Urban districts have challenges unique to their environments. “Defining a clear body of expertise needed to work in an urban setting is a very tough job, but it appears to be central to the work of these schools” (Louis & Ingram, 2003, p. 173). Manning and Kovach (2003), explained that the pressure to close the achievement gap, as outlined in NCLB, is most significant in districts with high levels of poverty. “In order to close the

achievement gap for all children, it is necessary for states, school districts, and schools to address inequities in resources in students' opportunities to learn" (p. 30). Resources can be material or in the form of personnel. Districts with achievement gaps are forced to identify the appropriate resources needed to help improve student achievement on their own.

Educators in District XYZ have worked to close the local achievement gap for many years. As can be seen in Table 4, the gap between student groups has narrowed, but has not disappeared. One strategy for closing the gap was hiring teacher leaders to work on-site with teachers as an instructional intervention. Academic achievement has improved, but teacher leaders and district officials would benefit from knowing which performance skills from the Kansas teacher leader standards are most valued by those with whom the teacher leaders work in order to best evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy. Very few teacher leader or instructional coach studies found by this researcher include a focus on urban issues (Baker, 2010; Byng, 2011; Chesson, 2011; Ford, 1993), yet the challenges of the urban environment have contributed directly to the decision to put teacher leaders in place in District XYZ (District Official A, personal communication, November 28, 2011). More research connected to the teacher leader role in urban schools as associated with teacher leader standards is necessary.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study contribute to existing literature about teacher leaders and provide information for state departments and universities as they plan for coursework to support the teacher leader endorsement process. Additionally, District XYZ could benefit from the results by knowing the performance skills the teachers, administrators,

and teacher leaders think are most closely connected to teacher leader effective practice. This information could help district officials identify types of support they could provide for teacher leaders to help them perform their jobs most effectively.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders from District XYZ regarding the performance skills outlined in the Kansas teacher leader standards that most significantly contribute to the effectiveness of individuals working as teacher leaders, as well as the level of alignment among the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders.

Delimitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined delimitations as “self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study” (p. 134). This research study was delimited to perceptions of elementary teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders in District XYZ during the 2011 – 2012 school year. Only certified elementary teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders were surveyed because they are the ones who work most closely with teacher leaders. The elementary level was specifically selected because elementary schools are generally smaller than middle and high schools, creating more frequent opportunities for interactions between the teacher leaders and other certified staff. In addition, in the elementary setting, teachers work with the entire scope of curricular content; whereas in the middle and high school settings, teachers work primarily with one main subject and are frequently departmentalized.

Assumptions

Assumptions are beliefs about the variables, samples, respondents, or setting the researcher supposes or takes for granted when conducting and analyzing research.

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), “delineation of assumptions provides a basis for formulating research questions or stating hypotheses and for interpreting data resulting from the study; and assumptions provide meaning to the conclusion and lend support to the recommendations” (p. 135).

Assumptions for the current study included:

1. Survey respondents understood the intent of the questions.
2. Survey respondents answered honestly.
3. Survey respondents have worked with someone they consider to be an effective teacher leader.
4. The survey is an accurate measure of perceptions.
5. The researcher’s job as a teacher leader in District XYZ did not influence the results of the study.

Research Questions

Research questions help to establish the focus of the study. The following questions were designed to examine perceptions of three distinct groups: teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders.

1. Which performance skills of teacher leaders do teachers perceive to significantly contribute to effective practice?
2. Which performance skills of teacher leaders do administrators perceive to significantly contribute to effective practice?

3. Which performance skills of teacher leaders do teacher leaders perceive to significantly contribute to effective practice?
4. To what extent are the perceptions of teachers, administrators and teacher leaders aligned with regard to the performance skills of teacher leaders?

Definition of Terms

Achievement Gap –

A substantive performance difference on each area of the state testing system between the various groups of students, including male and female students, students with and without disabilities, students with and without proficiency in English, minority and nonminority students, and students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch and those who are not eligible. (Christie, 2002, p. 102)

Adult Learning – “Increases in our cognitive, affective (emotional), interpersonal and intrapersonal capacities that enable us to manage better the complex demands of teaching, learning, leadership, and life” (Drago-Severson, 2008, p. 60).

Effectiveness – “There is no one agreed upon list of characteristics of effective teacher leaders across the nation” (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 97). Killion and Harrison (2006) proposed that some common areas in which teacher leaders need qualifications are: “beliefs, teaching expertise, coaching skills, relationship skills, content expertise and leadership” (p. 97).

Professional Development –

To serve teachers’ needs, professional development must embrace a range of opportunities that allow teachers to share what they know and what they

want to learn and to connect their learning to the contexts of their teaching. Professional development activities must allow teachers to engage actively in cooperative experiences that are sustained over time. (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, para. 15)

Professional Learning Communities –

Educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improve learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators. (DuFour, DuFour, Eacker, & Many, 2006 p. 14)

Teacher Leader –

Teacher leaders have a single guiding purpose – to build capacity in others. They use their talents to influence, shape support, and catalyze change that results in increased student achievement. Their actions reveal their fundamental belief that the more they build capacity in others, the more they contribute to sustaining long-term, deep transformation that allows others to address today's challenges and to be prepared for facing those that arise tomorrow. (Killion, 2011, p. 11)

Overview of Methodology

This survey research was designed to measure the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders regarding the teacher leader performance skills perceived to most significantly contribute to effective practice. The sample was

purposively selected for this study. This sample met unique criteria relevant to the research. The sample surveyed for this study had a foundation for perceptions based on years of experience. District XYZ has employed individuals to work in the position of teacher leader in elementary schools for more longer than ten years. The teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders who work with these teacher leaders have a unique body of experience not found in all districts. The instrument used to measure perceptions was a survey created by the researcher. The survey questions were derived from the Kansas teacher leader standards. The design process and procedures used to increase validity and reliability of the survey instrument are further explained and presented in chapter three. Data were collected electronically through Survey Monkey, a web-based survey tool. Compiled data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using SPSS version 20.0.

Summary and Organization of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one introduced the background of the study, problem statement, purpose and significance of the study. An overview of the methodology, research questions and hypothesis, objectives, delimitations, and the definition of key terms were provided. In chapter two, the literature reviewed for the study focuses on the following topics as the overarching concepts for the study: achievement gap, leadership, teacher effectiveness and teacher leadership, including research associated with each of the eight Kansas teacher leader standards. Chapter three describes the methodology of the study; including research design, population and sample, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, hypothesis testing and limitations of the study. In chapter four, the findings of the study

are presented through the descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing results and additional analyses. Chapter five concludes the study by providing a summary of previous chapters, findings related to the research in the literature, and conclusions highlighting implications for action and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Current levels of accountability as outlined in NCLB are stringent. School leaders are experiencing significant pressure to support student achievement goals. “The law seeks equality in results with no excuses—nobody out of line, everybody arriving at the same destination at the same time” (Chapman, 2007, p. 25). Schools and districts with achievement gaps are scrambling to find ways to improve. One option explored has been to expand leadership beyond the principal. “Teacher leadership is an idea whose time has come. The unprecedented demands being placed on schools today require leadership at every level” (Danielson, 2007, p. 19).

The literature reviewed in this chapter addresses the achievement gap in urban areas, the value of effective instruction, school leadership and teacher leadership as the overarching concepts associated with this study. York-Barr and Duke (2004) supported this approach in their meta-analysis of research studies related to teacher leadership:

Most of the existing research is limited to case study designs, small sample sizes, and self-report interview methodologies. The few large-scale quantitative studies that do exist have not provided evidence of the effects of teacher leadership but have exposed dilemmas in attempting to define teacher leadership in ways that make quantification possible and meaningful. The teacher leadership research continues to be idiosyncratic in nature, lacking an overarching conceptual framework and common or complementary theoretical underpinnings. (p. 287)

In addition, this chapter reviews the research associated with each of the standards.

Current pressure is for every school to make AYP on statewide tests in multiple disaggregated categories (Chapman, 2007, p. 26). School and district leaders recognize the need to directly address achievement gaps present in their schools.

Achievement Gap

Many schools are diversely populated in accordance with the ruling of the Supreme Court in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, KS* decision delivered on May 17, 1954. In the 11 page ruling, written by Chief Justice Earl Warren, the words “we conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal” forever changed the composition of the student body of schools in the United States (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954). In Willoughby’s (2004) words, “the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 finally gave some teeth to *Brown*” (p. 45). He cited the 1971 North Carolina case of *Swan v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, which allowed school systems to bus students as a way of integrating schools, as the next important milestone in American integration (Willoughby, 2004). However, as highlighted by Orfield and Frankenburg (2004), school composition is not currently as fully integrated as the laws intend. “In some areas, very high levels of integration remain. In others, particularly our large central city districts that educate one quarter of black and Latino students, high levels of isolation by race and poverty exist” (p. 58). In those large central city districts, achievement gaps are prevalent.

To summarize the research of Williams (2003), in *Closing the Achievement Gap*, there are many explanations for the state of achievement gaps in America. Some of the reasons she listed are poverty, academic coursework and instruction, student attendance

and mobility rates, parenting, and teacher quality and attitudes (p.15). Recent data show evidence of achievement gaps still in existence. However, some urban schools have been successful in making a difference with both the African American and Latino populations. In *Stuck Schools: A Framework for Identifying Schools Where Students Need Change-Now!* Ushomirsky and Hall contended that “The notion that no one knows how to improve low-performing schools doesn’t hold up. Degrees of progress differ from state to state, but a substantial number of schools in nearly every state are making great strides” (2010, p. 1). Christie’s (2002) research found that schools and districts need to invest energy and effort into finding out what works with urban students.

Closing the achievement gap is all about maximizing students’ abilities and expecting from them what their parents would want....All parents should be able to trust that the schools will “do the right thing” for their children including holding them accountable for their behavior and maximizing their talents. (p. 103)

Educators and researchers recognize the importance of high quality teaching in urban schools as the difference maker. “The literature shows that when the conditions are right, what schools do relative to instruction does make a difference. It is also evident that schools must be organized around clear goals focused on academic standards that include high expectations for performance by all students” (Manning & Kovach, 2003, p. 43). Research supports the contention that effective teachers can positively impact the lives of students in urban schools.

Effective Instruction

As emphasized by President Obama in his dedication to the *2010 Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*:

We know that from the moment students enter a school, the most important factor in their success is not the color of their skin or the income of their parents – it is the teacher standing at the front of the classroom. To ensure the success of our children, we must do better to recruit, develop, support, retain, and reward outstanding teachers in America’s classrooms. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 1)

A major goal of the creators of NCLB was to draw attention to teachers (Burton, Guam, & Hanson, 2006). “Few education issues have received more attention in recent times than the problem of ensuring that all elementary and secondary classrooms are staffed with high-quality teachers” (Ingersoll, 2007, p. 20). The term high quality has different connotations and is interpreted differently by various researchers and educational experts. According to Hawley and Nieto (2010), current public policy “focuses more on teacher qualifications than on teacher quality, despite the research-based and commonsense proposition that the key to effective schools is effective teaching – particularly in racially and ethnically diverse schools” (p. 68). While it is desirable to have content knowledge, research shows teachers also need to understand pedagogy. In Stumbo and McWalters (2010) research, they found that “teacher quality largely refers to how well teachers know their content as measured by the postsecondary courses they have taken. The shift toward effectiveness focuses on how well teachers perform with students” (p. 10).

Examining teacher effectiveness shifts the focus from content knowledge to pedagogical knowledge.

Teacher effectiveness is particularly important in urban schools. Recruitment of qualified teachers in urban districts can be a challenge. Teachers who grew up in suburban or rural areas are often not prepared for the demands of urban teaching. New teachers have limited experiences and must rely on training they received in college. In *Star Teachers of Children in Poverty*, Haberman (1995) criticized pre-service teacher education programs. “Young adults are certified and sent to their demise by school of education faculty ignorant of or unable to deal with urban bureaucracies. Fifty percent of new teachers quit in five years” (p. 67). New teachers’ leaving is only one aspect of the teacher turnover rate.

In Boyd, Lankford, Loeb and Wyckoff’s (2005) synthesis of research related to short careers of teachers in schools with low-performing students, another prevalent issue related to teacher effectiveness in urban schools is teacher turnover rate. “Low-achieving students are taught by the least-qualified teachers. These disparities begin when teachers first take their jobs, and in urban areas they are worsened by teachers’ subsequent decisions to transfer and quit” (p. 166). Further support for this finding came in a review of quantitative and qualitative research studies where Daley, Guarino, & Santibañez (2006) found that “teacher turnover rates tend to be higher in urban schools, particularly those in large urban areas” (pp. 189–90). Urban district leaders have worked to find ways to retain quality teachers.

School leaders in urban schools must do whatever is necessary to foster effectiveness among the teaching staff. Ingersoll’s (2007) findings show that schools

should be held accountable for teacher performance. She declared that while some teachers are capable of performing well, “there is no question that some teachers perform poorly and are inadequate for the job” (Ingersoll, 2007, p. 21). Educational leaders must be prepared to support teachers through observation, feedback, and professional learning opportunities. One of the priorities set forth in the *2010 Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act* is:

We are calling on states and districts to develop and implement systems of teacher and principal evaluation and support, and to identify effective and highly effective teachers and principals on the basis of student growth and other factors. These systems will inform professional development and help teachers and principals improve student learning. In addition, a new program will support ambitious efforts to recruit, place, reward, retain, and promote effective teachers and principals and enhance the profession of teaching. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 4)

Teachers support student growth and achievement and principals support teacher growth and development. In Daley et al.’s (2006) research review, they found consistent documentation about the importance of support from school leaders. Schools that provided teachers with more autonomy and administrative support had lower teacher turnover. Moreover, schools that provided mentoring and induction programs, particularly those related to collegial support, had lower rates of turnover among beginning teachers (p. 197). Effective leadership is crucial. Leaders must be able to identify strengths and weaknesses in their teachers in order to help identify ways to help them grow as professionals.

Leadership

“A growing number of school leaders are paying attention to data showing that expert teachers hold the key to student achievement” (Berry, Johnson, & Montgomery, 2005, p. 56). One major responsibility of a principal is the evaluation process. This process should be a source of growth opportunities for teachers. Unfortunately, as highlighted by Toch (2008) this is often not the case. “In addition to rarely giving unsatisfactory ratings, principals rarely use the evaluations to help teachers improve instruction and student achievement. They frequently don't even bother to discuss the results of their evaluations with the teachers involved” (p. 32). DuFour and Marzano (2009) defined the typical cycle of observations conducted by principals as frequent walk-throughs and lengthier classroom observations to gather information. Their research findings indicated that the effort and time spent by the principal engaged in these activities “does little to the overall improvement of the school” (p. 63). The principal has so many responsibilities that this model of intended growth provides little support for teachers who are not considered to be effective.

Researchers like Marzano (2003) have consistently emphasized the importance of principals encouraging growth and leadership among the staff instead of trying to be the sole leader. “Although it is certainly true that strong leadership from the principal can be a powerful force toward school reform, the notion that an individual can effect change by sheer will and personality is simply not supported by research” (Marzano, 2003, p. 174). One way leaders can promote teacher effectiveness and retain quality teachers is to work towards building and sustaining a sense of collaboration within the school. In her work with schools, Nieto (2009) found that one of the most effective moves a leader could

make would be to establish an environment of strong collaborative relationships (p. 11). Support for shared leadership comes from experts in the field. “In different ways, teacher leaders mobilize the efforts of their closest colleagues to enhance the school’s program for the benefit of the students” (Danielson, 2007, p. 17). Teachers can be a strong source of leadership in these collaborative environments.

Teacher Leadership

Johnson and Donaldson (2007) found evidence of principals facing demands from all types of constituents. “To meet these demands, principals are appointing increasing numbers of teacher leaders to work with colleagues in such roles as instructional coach, lead teacher, mentor coordinator, and data analyst” (Johnson & Donaldson, 2007, p. 8). Teachers have begun to function in different leadership roles in response to the needs of principals, teachers, and district leaders. According to Sweeney (2007), teacher leaders are uniquely qualified to assist the principal with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement because they understand the needs of teachers and students.

More and more, school districts are looking toward school-based coaching as a method to directly influence student learning. School-based coaches build content, leadership, and professional development capacity at the school site. They are faculty members who work alongside teachers to ensure instruction is targeted to meet student needs, is aligned with the district curriculum, and helps produce the desired student learning outcomes. A prerequisite for school-based coaches is a deep understanding of the research around high quality instruction. They are informal leaders in their schools, and, in the end, are measured by how

well they have influenced both teacher and student learning. (Sweeney, 2007, p. 39)

Teachers have historically functioned in leadership roles in many different capacities, whether formal or informal. Expanding the concept of leadership within a school can create opportunities for growth for both teachers taking on the leadership role, and teachers with whom they work.

Districts employing teacher leaders in formal positions have made a financial commitment to support teacher growth and student achievement through on-site support systems (Killion, 2007, pp. 12-13). “School districts that want to improve make a wise investment when they cultivate and encourage teacher leaders, because they are in a position to take the long view and carry out long-range projects” (Danielson, 2007, p. 14). Other researchers identified the concept of continuity as an important element of the teacher leader role. “In other words, teacher leaders contribute to the sustainability of a building. A sudden change in administrative personnel will not be as traumatic if shared leadership is the norm” (Hambright & Franco, 2008, p. 272). The teacher leader can provide continuity for the staff if the principal is reassigned.

Danielson (2007) researched the teacher leader role extensively. Part of her research focused on the characteristics of individuals deemed to be effective teacher leaders.

A number of values and dispositions make certain individuals ideally suited for teacher leadership. Effective teacher leaders are open-minded and respectful of others’ views. They display optimism and enthusiasm, confidence and decisiveness. They persevere and do not permit setbacks to derail an important

initiative they are pursuing. On the other hand, they are flexible and willing to try a different approach if the first effort runs into roadblocks. Many attributes of good teacher leaders are fundamentally the same as the attributes of good teachers: persuasiveness, open-mindedness, flexibility, confidence and expertise in their fields. Despite these similarities, however, working with colleagues is profoundly different from working with students and the skills that teachers learn in their preparation programs do not necessarily prepare them to extend their leadership beyond their own classrooms. (Danielson, 2007, p. 16)

Danielson concluded that teacher leaders can be a valuable resource to a school or district, but they in turn need some level of support in order to do their jobs effectively. In her research, she found that moving into a leadership role required some level of knowledge of curriculum planning, data analysis, facilitation skills and the ability to lead a discussion group. She also contended that the previously listed skills are not those typically taught in teacher education programs (p. 16). Very little research is available about training programs for teacher leaders because they are just beginning to emerge. Consequently, any training districts have provided for teacher leaders has typically either been created within the system, or has been designed by a consultant hired to work specifically with the teacher leaders or with principals and teacher leaders together (Brady, 2007, p. 48). “Because teacher leaders know firsthand what is needed to improve student learning, promoting and supporting teacher leadership are crucial to the success of any education reform effort” (Dozier, 2007, p. 54). Once the decision is made to hire teacher leaders in formal positions, support should be provided to maximize their impact.

In Killion's (2007) research, she found that districts typically have their own systems of evaluation to determine the effectiveness of teacher leaders. Superintendents and school boards consider many factors when deciding whether or not to fund the teacher leader positions. She suggested that the typical measure of success would be a review of student performance, which Killion found to be an insufficient measure of teacher leader impact. She suggested focusing instead on data showing both student achievement and the culture of professional collaboration which could be measured by job satisfaction and teaching performance (p. 15). The impact of a teacher leader can be difficult to measure. Ultimately it is the superintendent and school board who decide the value of this position.

In the state of Kansas, the Department of Education has formally recognized the need for increased leadership among teachers and has taken steps to support the development and retention of teacher leaders by creating specific standards for teacher leaders and creating an endorsement process. From the perspective of a committee member,

a small group of twelve educational professionals representing universities, school districts, the state department and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) met to draft the Kansas teacher leader standards. They used drafts of teacher leader standards developed by Fairfax, Virginia and the KODAK commission as a foundation. The Kansas standards were developed by group consensus. The group worked to establish standards and guidelines for a new endorsement for teacher leadership. (H. B. Frye, personal communication, October 1, 2012)

The Kansas teacher leader standards were released in 2009 (KSDE, 2008).

Two years later, national teacher leader standard domains were developed and released by a national organization, the Teacher Leader Exploratory Consortium (TLEC, n.d., p .2) (see Appendix A). The standards not only emphasize particular aspects of the work of a teacher leader, but further clarify the expectations with both knowledge and performance based indicators. Research connections to each of the teacher leader standards as specified by KSDE (2008) are described below.

Standard 1: The teacher leader is able to apply strategies of adult learning across teacher leadership activities. “School-based coaches face complex challenges. The shift to teaching adults from teaching children is dramatic. Coaches are no longer closely connected to a group of students, but instead are focused on adult learning and how it impacts student learning” (Sweeney, 2007, p. 39). Drago-Severson (2008) emphasized the importance of having a knowledge base about the needs of adult learners in her work. She found there are four practices to keep in mind to support adult learners: “teaming, providing others with leadership roles, collegial inquiry, and mentoring” (p. 62). These practices support adults with different ways of knowing, promote collaboration and offer opportunities to “engage in reflective practice as a tool for professional and personal growth” (Drago-Severson, 2008, p. 62). Teachers moving into a teacher leadership role need to learn and understand theories associated with adult learners and their development. Brookfield (1986) identified six basic principles associated with effective facilitation for adult learners:

- Participation in learning is voluntary,
- Effective practice is characterized by a respect among participants for each others’ self worth,

- Facilitation is collaborative,
- Praxis (alternating engagement in exploration, action and reflection) is placed at the heart of effective facilitation,
- Facilitation aims to foster in adults a spirit of critical reflection,
- The aim of facilitation is the nurturing of self-directed, empowered adults. (pp. 9-11)

Adults need opportunities to learn from others in a supportive yet challenging atmosphere. Finding ways to collaborate with teachers and helping them collaborate with colleagues is vitally important to the success of teacher leaders. In Marzano, Waters & McNulty's (2005) extensive analysis of research on school leadership, they identified collegiality and professionalism as factors vitally impacting school performance (pp. 88-89). Teacher leaders can contribute to the overall collegial atmosphere in a school by organizing and facilitating opportunities for collaboration among staff members.

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) found few schools to support a structure of shared problem solving (p. 22). One way for teacher leaders to help teachers identify problems to bring to a collaborative analysis is through observation and feedback.

Teacher leaders can be an extra set of eyes and ears for the classroom teacher to gather data and begin a problem-solving process to support student learning.

Standard 2: The teacher leader is able to advance the professional skills of colleagues by demonstrating and applying expertise in observational skills and in providing quality feedback in order to support reflective practice focused on improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Developing an atmosphere of trust and collegiality is imperative for a teacher leader (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2011, p. 49).

There are many ways a teacher leader can learn what is happening in classrooms, but the most informative and direct way is to be in the classroom with the teacher and the students.

Coaches have to learn to discuss instructional issues with each teacher in a way that enlightens without threatening or offending the teacher. The coach must establish and maintain the trust and respect of teachers. Teachers must trust coaches as another pair of eyes and ears gauging how their instruction affects learners — but without fear of punitive reporting to the principal. Principals must trust coaches to be their allies in raising student achievement, yet understand that coaches must honor teacher confidences. (Brady, 2007, p. 47)

Relationships teacher leaders establish with teachers will vary with each individual. Teacher leaders must be adept at forming many different types of bonds. Careful planning on the part of the teacher leader can enhance the observation with feedback cycle experience and alleviate discomfort until effective, comfortable working relationships are established (Brady, 2007, p. 47).

According to Brady (2007), “the goal is to build teachers’ capacity to analyze what they are doing in the classroom so they can expand on what works and change what doesn’t” (p. 48). To analyze and make changes, teachers need to engage in reflection. “Reflection describes a cooperative process between teacher and coach. Yet, for reflection to take place, the teacher must participate in the process and share responsibility with the coach for setting the stage for reflection” (Yopp, Burroughs, Luebeck, Heldema, Mitchell, & Sutton, 2011, p. 51). The teacher leader’s focus should be on supporting and strengthening instruction regardless of the teacher’s current

abilities. “Because they lack positional power, it is important for teacher leaders to lead by example by helping others, working collaboratively and using every tool available (Hohenbrink et. al., 2011, p. 44). Working collaboratively with others effectively takes careful planning. By preparing for interactions with teachers, teacher leaders can increase the level of collaboration within a school.

Standard 3: The teacher leader is able to improve the quality of colleagues’ collaboration and interaction with families and other stakeholders. “In today’s schools, the relationship between educators and parents is becoming one in which both professionals and families have mutual power and influence regarding a child’s educational experience” (Martin & Hagan-Burke, 2002, para. 2). Teacher leaders have less contact with parents and families than teachers. However, teacher leaders can help teachers understand and value the importance of home-school connections in order to assist in strengthening relationships with families and other stakeholders. “Most schools strive for a mutually collaborative relationship between educators and parents, yet attaining this goal remains elusive for many. The means to establishing a home-school partnership is positive communication” (Martin & Hagan-Burke, 2002, para. 25). Strong communication skills are fostered and strengthened in a collaborative environment. “Many factors can undermine parent teacher relationships. Many teachers fail to form real alliances with parents because they fear that getting below the surface will stir up conflict” (Weissbourd, 2009, p. 29). Teacher leaders can help teachers see how collaborative communication skills they use with colleagues can help create more effective communication with parents.

There are unique challenges in urban schools. Urban parents are increasingly mobile and difficult to contact. This can cause frustration and resentment towards these parents (Musti-Rao & Cartledge, 2004, para. 3). Veteran teachers and teacher leaders in urban schools understand the differing needs of urban families. They understand that communication needs to be “clear, consistent, and positive, and parents need to believe that they play an important role in their children's learning” (Musti-Rao & Cartledge, 2004, para. 3). Weissbourd’s (2009) research indicated many parents of urban children grew up in the urban core themselves. Their perceptions of school are based on their own experiences as children. Often they have bad memories of being a student and little experience advocating for their children in a setting with formal rules and expectations which create barriers to effective communication (p. 29). Overcoming communication barriers is a challenge, but the benefits outweigh the struggle.

Ultimately, the goal of strengthening home-school relationships is to enhance the educational experience for children. “Children who are aware of the collaborative relationship know that parents and teachers care about their education. They are more likely to do their best academically and exhibit good behavior in class” (Musti-Rao & Cartledge, 2004, para. 23). Teacher leaders can help teachers understand better how to foster the type of environment that will be open and welcoming to parents. They can also educate teachers about what researchers have learned about teachers and families working together. Teachers who learn to work successfully with families will create the right environment for students to be successful.

Standard 4: The teacher leader is able to initiate and facilitate colleagues’ design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for individual

and group decision making. “Action research is a reflective systematic inquiry that focuses on a relevant problem in teaching or learning for the purpose of enacting meaningful change to address that problem” (Brighton, 2009, p. 40). Educational researchers have promoted the idea of implementing research practices in schools for years. “The process of teaching is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The system within which we operate demands that quality of work be represented as quantitative measures and as teachers, we are accountable for student success” (Rinaldo, 2005, para. 12). In Allen and Calhoun’s (1998) words, there are many benefits of conducting research within an instructional environment.

In schools that incorporated schoolwide action research into the life of the school, teachers reported that their participation in such research helped them focus their attention on teaching and learning issues that, in turn, directly affected students. These "high implementation" schools showed increases in student achievement that were attributed in part to the schoolwide action research efforts. Teachers deeply involved with the research reported an increase in their sense of efficacy and professional expertise. (para. 24)

Teachers can learn from conducting research. The whole point of conducting research is to lead to improvements in teaching (Hatch, 2006). Research from other studies indicates new ways of looking at where we are and where we might go. Action research provides a foundation and support for making changes. Change is constant and necessary.

Vandeweghe and Varney (2006) proposed the following as an explanation for changing:

Inquiry motivates change. Teachers change practices for many reasons: a strategy no longer works or teachers simply tire of it, student populations change, a new

idea excites teachers, and so on. But when examining data that challenge their ways of thinking about practice, good teachers are impelled to change. (para. 27)

Teachers unfamiliar with action research can benefit from leaders interested in the inquiry process. Teacher leaders can help teachers understand the value and importance of research, and assist with planning and preparation. According to Hatch (2006), organizing a plan and creating a design for the research is foundational to effective implementation of action research (p. 1). Action research is best conducted in a collaborative format. “Effective action research leadership teams generally consisted of teacher leaders who worked closely with school administrators” (Allen & Calhoun, 1998, para. 22). Teachers and teacher leaders who have learned to collaborate successfully can use their collaboration skills to explore issues together.

Standard 5: The teacher leader is able to develop and support collaborative teams and promote collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice.

Most of the research connected to collaboration ties in directly to the concept of a professional learning community. “Professional learning communities acknowledge there is no hope of helping all students learn unless those within the school work collaboratively in a collective effort to achieve that fundamental purpose” (Eaker & Keating, 2008, p. 15). Professional learning communities (PLC’s) are structured in many different ways. As Morgan, Williams, and Plesec (2011) found, teacher leaders can help facilitate grade level meetings, one type of PLC, with the following benefits:

Grade-level meetings are an effective vehicle to improve classroom instruction because they promote open conversations about the relationship between teaching and student learning. Because the teacher leader works at a particular school,

carryover conversations into the next day or week are common. There is no expert coming in, sharing ideas, and leaving without providing follow-up support. Instead, teachers become experts for one another as they regularly work to offer thoughtful instruction to their students. (p. 31)

Teacher leaders can become a valuable link between learning and practice for teachers by creating opportunities to discuss ideas.

Research has shown the value of collaboration in urban schools. In Hollins' (2006) work with the Urban Literacy Institute, she learned the value of examining instructional techniques and strategies. "Changing instructional practice is at the heart of improving learning outcomes for under-served and underachieving students" (p. 48). Her work was focused on professional growth. She went on to add,

to truly improve teaching, urban schools need to transform their culture of practice from one that assumes that barriers to learning reside in the students to one that expects teachers to collectively assume responsibility for making sure all students learn (Hollins, 2006, p. 48).

Hawley and Nieto (2010) further supported her findings saying, "school-based professional learning communities can improve teaching and learning and lead to a fundamental change in teachers' work" (p. 70). Leading for change is an important skill every educational leader needs to develop.

Standard 6: The teacher leader is able to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement, and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school community.

“Leadership is considered to be vital to the successful functioning of many aspects of a school” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 5) Leadership has been examined by researchers for decades. Today’s leader faces different challenges.

Without doubt, teachers and school leaders in the United States understand fierce and unforgiving realities. Increasing numbers believe that they have no independent agency, or, in other words, that they have been deskilled.

Legislators, politicians, and pundits, on the other hand, see the situation quite differently. They believe that schooling finally has been brought to heel through altogether proper management and budgetary controls that recognize only a reduced set of goals. (Davis, 2004, para. 3)

Educators are the ones who need to impact change in schools. “Many thousands of educators across the nation believe that they can make no serious decisions about their work. This frustration is common among not only classroom teachers, but also school leaders at every level” (Davis, 2004, para.1). Marzano et al.’s (2005) research showed otherwise. In their meta-analysis of several research studies, they found a statistically significant difference between school performance of highly rated principals and school performance of poorly rated principals (p. 31). This body of research clearly shows the impact of effective leaders.

“School leaders need to know how to effect the changes necessary to “move the needle” on school performance. To be effective requires developing skills in various arenas, including leading change, focusing interventions, managing resources, improving instruction, and analyzing results” (Gray & Bishop, 2009, p. 28). In Fullan and Hargreaves’ (1996) research, they concluded that proposals for change will come to

nothing unless teachers adopt them in their own classrooms and translate them into practice (p. 13). Schmoker (2006), in his book *Results Now*, supported Fullan and Hargreaves research. “It’s this simple: schools won’t improve until the average building leader begins to work cooperatively with teachers to truly, meaningfully oversee and improve instructional quality” (p. 29). Based on the research presented here, leaders must work with teachers to create change.

Researchers consistently highlight quality instruction as the basis for change and school reform. As Rose (2010) found, support for actually implementing change in practice is somewhat lacking in research. “Everyone in the current reform environment acknowledges the importance of good teaching. But most characterizations of teaching miss the richness and complexity of the work....moreover, reform initiatives lack depth on how to develop good teachers” (p. 9). Researchers and educational experts have explored developing collaborative cultures and systems of support as an avenue for improving instruction.

Current approaches to change favor establishing a collaborative environment. “Collaborative cultures create and sustain more satisfying and productive work environments. By empowering teachers and reducing the uncertainties of the job that must otherwise be faced in isolation, collaborative cultures facilitate commitment to change and improvement” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 49). Teacher leaders can impact the formation and continuation of a collaborative approach in a school. As Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) found, leadership can be fostered among all teachers within a collaborative environment. “In the fully functioning collaborative school, many (indeed

all) teachers are leaders” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 51). In more recent work, Fullan (2009) continued to focus on collaboration as a focus for school change:

The measure of collective efficacy is that school and district leaders have confidence that they and their peers can together figure out how to make progress—that is, their ongoing interaction and experience with one another build the trust and knowledge that they are collectively responsible and good at their work. It is not the sum total of individual leadership qualities that counts, but the fact that people learn from and identify with one another. System learning is an interactive activity, not an individual one. (para. 16)

Change happens in different ways, but modern researchers include some type of data in all elements of measurement regarding the effect of change.

Standard 7: The teacher leader is able to inform and facilitate colleagues’ selection or design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning. “Teachers have learned that data helps us identify priorities for improvement. When schools formally measure and publicize their weaknesses, addressing problem areas acquires new urgency” (Schmoker, 2009, p. 70). Teachers today are immersed in data. Simply having data is insufficient; data must be used intentionally and purposefully to impact student achievement. Buhle and Blachowicz (2009) described ways to think about using formative data.

The main goal of formative assessment is to inform teachers of the active knowledge, skills, and strategies their students have mastered and to point to instruction that will move students farther along the path to learning. Yet the

process of translating assessment into instructional decision making is far from easy (p. 43).

According to Buhle and Blachowicz (2009), assuming teachers would be able to analyze data and use it to inform instruction without coaching and support would be a far too simplistic approach. Data analysis has become a vital aspect of teaching. Some teachers entered the profession with experience and knowledge in this area, while others learn on the job.

Teacher leaders can play an important role in data collection, analysis and interpretation. Steel and Boudett's (2009) work focused on collaborative use of data. They found three major benefits associated with a collaborative approach to data use: organizational learning, improved internal accountability, and a safety net for professional growth (p. 56). A focus of their work was to help teachers learn to facilitate data meetings. "Collaborative data use requires organized, accessible data and well-planned, smoothly facilitated meetings" (Steel & Boudett, 2009, p. 57). Teacher leaders can model the process and build leadership skills of colleagues by helping them to feel comfortable and prepared to facilitate data meetings. Schmoker (2009) expressed concern about how teachers traditionally use data, and proposed ideas for change. "We must harness the power of data to make school more interesting and relevant – and to prepare students to succeed as workers, college students, and informed citizens" (p. 73). Data has recently become an important tool in professional development to help teachers learn in an authentic, meaningful way.

Standard 8: The teacher leader is able to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated and differentiated professional development

based on assessed student and teacher needs. Most researchers agree the main goal of professional development is to build fundamental knowledge and skills. Professional development activities are designed for adult learners. Gleason (2010) proposed keeping in mind the needs of adult learners when identifying processes aligned with content for use within professional development sessions (p. 47). Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) criticized the general intent of professional development. “Many staff development initiatives take the form of something that is done *to* teachers rather than *with* them, still less *by* them” (p. 17). Professional development is an integral part of the American education system.

Beginning with pre-service education and continuing throughout a teacher's career, teacher development must focus on deepening teachers' understanding of the processes of teaching and learning and of the students they teach. Effective professional development involves teachers both as learners and as teachers and allows them to struggle with the uncertainties that accompany each role.

(Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, para. 3)

School leaders play an integral part in planning and supporting professional development. Teacher leaders are typically integrally involved in both the design and delivery of professional development.

In Gleason's (2010) summary of school leadership, when school leaders develop schedules that allow for the right kind of time, ward off distractions, and support the development of different collaborative groups, the setting is best for professional learning to occur (p. 47). Responsibility for arranging and protecting time for professional learning falls to the school leader. Once time has been established, Gleason (2010) also

recommended keeping standards for content high to ensure that the content of the professional learning is relevant and rigorous (p. 47). Participation in professional development is typically mandatory. Active participation with intent to learn cannot be mandated. Time spent in professional development activities must yield results. Schools and districts no longer have the luxury of choosing learning activities based on personal preference.

Curry and Killion (2009) found that “professional development is an expedient way to build knowledge and skills associated with innovations in curriculum and instruction” (p. 58). However, they also promoted “reform oriented professional development” which differs from traditional in “increased implementation and transformation of practice to impact student learning” (Curry & Killion, 2009, p. 58). Professional development design, and delivery has changed during the past few decades. Nieto (2009) focused on changes in professional development:

Probably the most significant action school districts can take in changing the nature of professional development is to provide meaningful and engaging programs that respect the intelligence and good will of teachers and help them grow in terms of knowledge, awareness, and practice. Such professional development is characterized by teachers' ability to select the topics they want to learn more about and the opportunity to work collaboratively with colleagues. (Nieto, 2009, p. 10)

Experts like Fullan (2007) have agreed change is necessary. “The notion that external ideas alone will result in changes in the classroom and school is deeply flawed as a theory of action” (p. 35). Professional development cannot be simply a dissemination of ideas.

In order to meet teachers' needs, professional development sessions should be redesigned. "The future of improvement, indeed of the profession itself, depends on a radical shift in how we conceive learning and the conditions under which teachers and students work" (Fullan, 2007, p. 35). Teacher leaders and other professional developers need to learn from research to improve their work with teachers in this area. Researchers contend professional development should connect strongly to specific needs of teachers. One of the best ways to create connections is to embed the learning into daily work. "Job-embedded professional learning time also supports the kind of context-specific professional learning and action research that is effective in catalyzing change" (Wei, Andree, & Darling-Hammond, 2009, p. 30). Ongoing, relevant learning is more likely to impact specific change. Teachers need to learn in a variety of contexts.

To serve teachers' needs, professional development must embrace a range of opportunities that allow teachers to share what they know and what they want to learn and to connect their learning to the contexts of their teaching. Professional development activities must allow teachers to engage actively in cooperative experiences that are sustained over time and to reflect on the process as well as on the content of what they are learning. (Darling-Hammond & McLoughlin, 1995, para. 8)

The concept of one person as a leader is changing. Leadership in a school does not have to be the work of one individual.

Summary

The principal is the recognized and formal leader of a school. However, research findings (Ballek et al., 2005; Blankenstein, 2004; Berg, Miller & Souvanna, 2011;

Danielson, 2007; Donaldson, 2007; Hambright & Franco, 2008; Hohenbrink et al., 2011) show that school leaders today need to find ways to encourage leadership in others and embrace the concept of shared leadership. “The principal’s job is too big and too complex to be done alone. Moreover, principals who try to “fly solo” often feel isolated and tend to burn out” (Blankstein, 2004, p. 191). By encouraging teachers to take on leadership roles, principals are redefining the concept of leadership in schools.

Teacher leadership, as reviewed in this chapter, is characteristically different depending on the needs of the particular population a teacher serves. States are just beginning to formulate standards for teacher leaders (Killion, 2007). The standards reviewed in this chapter represent some commonalities typically found in expectations for teacher leadership. As stated by Ingersoll (2007) “the quality of teachers and teaching is undoubtedly an important factor in shaping students’ growth and learning” (p. 20). A teacher leader’s main responsibility is to impact student achievement (Brady, 2007; Killion, 2007; Sweeney, 2007; Yopp et al., 2011). Teacher leadership can and should contribute to the overall performance levels and improved culture of a school.

Chapter Three

Methods

This study was designed to identify the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders from District XYZ regarding performance skills outlined in the Kansas teacher leader standards that most significantly contribute to the effectiveness of individuals working as teacher leaders. This chapter includes the research design, the population and sampling, the instrument utilized in the study, the specifics of measurements obtained using the instrument, the validity and reliability of the instrument, and data collection procedures. An explanation of the data analysis and testing procedure is also presented in this chapter as well as the limitations of the study.

Research Design

This descriptive research study used a quantitative survey design. “Survey research is a form of descriptive research that involves collecting information about a research participant’s beliefs, attitudes, interests, or behavior through questionnaires, interviews, or paper and pencil tests” (Gall, Gall, & Borg., 2005, p. 180). Surveys allow researchers to gather data from many people in an expedient manner. The survey used in this study was designed to measure the perceptions of the significance of skills specified in the standards of being an effective teacher leader. Three groups of certified employees from one district were surveyed. Data was also used to compare the alignment of perceptions among the three groups in the sample.

Population, Sample and Sampling Procedures

The population for this study was comprised of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders. The sample for the study included 676 certified teachers, administrators,

and teacher leaders from the 30 elementary schools in one district in 2012. The sampling for this study was purposive rather than random. There are significant differences between the work of elementary teachers and teachers at the middle and high school level. In middle and high school, teachers are primarily departmentalized, working with very few subject matters such as language arts or mathematics only. In elementary schools, teachers are responsible for all subject matters. According to Lunenburg & Irby (2008), “purposive sampling involves selecting a sample based on the researcher’s experience or knowledge of the group to be sampled....Clear criteria provide a basis for describing and defending purposive samples” (p. 175). The sample selected for this study fit unique criteria. Some individuals in this sample have had experience working directly with, or functioning as teacher leaders for over ten years, giving them a foundation for forming opinions about their effectiveness.

Instrumentation and Measurement

The survey used for this study was created by the researcher. The survey instrument can be seen in Appendix C.

1. Apply strategies of adult learning?

	Not Significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very significant	Highly significant
Select only one option	<input type="radio"/>				

Figure 1. Microsoft Word 2007 survey appearance.

The researcher used a Likert style format. Numerical values associated with the categories ranged from 0 = Not Significant to 5 = Highly Significant. Each category represents one point on a five point scale. The Microsoft Word 2007 version in Appendix C shows the questions and options for responses (see figure 1). Actual

respondents only saw the SurveyMonkey.com version shown in figure 2 below. The content of the Survey Monkey version was identical to the content of the Word 2007 version. The numerical values were the same in the SurveyMonkey.com version as in the Word version. Respondents were asked to select a button under one category. Multiple response selection for each question was not an option.

1. Apply strategies of adult learning?

Select only one option	Not significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very significant	Highly significant
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 2. SurveyMonkey.com survey appearance.

This survey was created by the researcher because no published surveys were found that provided measurement for the variables selected for this study. “In most descriptive research studies, instruments must be developed by the researcher due to the fact that the study is related to a specific phenomenon” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p.32). The survey was in two parts: demographics and perceptions of teacher leader effectiveness.

The demographic questions were about current position, level of experience and level of education. These questions were asked to allow for potential categorization of respondents. The first question asked the respondents to identify their role: administrator, teacher leader, classroom teacher, special education teacher, ESL teacher or hold another teaching position (see Appendix C). If other was selected, the respondents were asked to type in the title of the position they hold. This question was asked to help delineate responses from various groups of respondents. The second demographic question asked respondents to quantify the number of years of experience working in education (see Appendix C). The stages of experience created by the researcher were one year, two to five years, six to ten years, eleven to fifteen years, sixteen to twenty years, and more than

twenty years. The responses were categorized in groups of five year bands with the exception of the earliest two groups and the last group. The one to five year stage was divided differently with intention for this research. First year teachers were set apart from others in the early range. Gabriel (2005) found that working with novices is different, new teachers need someone to guide them through their first year (p.42). First year teachers are likely to interact more frequently with teacher leaders, possibly impacting the analysis of the data from the survey. The last category of more than twenty years was created to help prevent personal identification, especially in the teacher leader and administrator groups. Respondents were asked to count the 2011 – 2012 year of the study as a year. The last type of demographic question asked respondents to identify their current level of education (see Appendix C). The response options were bachelor's degree, bachelor's degree with additional coursework, master's degree, master's degree with additional coursework, and doctorate or specialist's degree.

The second section of the survey was related to perceptions of teacher leader effectiveness. The questions were derived from the Kansas teacher leader standards (see Appendix B). The survey included one question per standard. The standards included in the survey were taken directly from the Kansas teacher leader standards with no alterations. In order to avoid redundancy, the stem: *in order to be an effective teacher leader* appeared only once at the top of the survey. For the eight standards based questions, the researcher utilized a five point Likert-type scale in the survey with the following labels: 1 = Not At All Significant, 2 = Somewhat Significant, 3 = Significant, 4 = Very Significant, 5 = Highly Significant. The term significant was utilized in the research questions for this study as well as within the survey questions. The design of

this study through the development of the research questions was focused on measuring the perceptions of participants. The term significant was utilized to connect the impact of particular performance skills with the perception of effective practice. By utilizing the term significant, the researcher's implication was that the connection between skills and performance carries weight and has meaning in this context.

- **Standard 1:** The teacher leader is able to apply strategies of adult learning across teacher leadership activities.
 - *Survey question 1:* [In order to be an effective teacher leader] how significant is the ability to apply strategies of adult learning?
- **Standard 2:** The teacher leader is able to advance the professional skills of colleagues by demonstrating and applying expertise in observational skills and in providing quality feedback in order to support reflective practice focused on improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
 - *Survey question 2:* [In order to be an effective teacher leader] how significant is the ability to advance the skills of colleagues by demonstrating expertise in observational skills and providing quality feedback in order to support reflective practice?
- **Standard 3:** The teacher leader is able to improve the quality of colleagues' collaboration and interaction with families and other stakeholders.
 - *Survey question 3:* [In order to be an effective teacher leader] how significant is the ability to assist colleagues' abilities to improve the quality of collaboration and interaction with families?

- **Standard 4:** The teacher leader is able to initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for individual and group decision making.
 - *Survey question 4:* [In order to be an effective teacher leader] how significant is the ability to initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for decision making?
- **Standard 5:** The teacher leader is able to develop and support collaborative teams and promote collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice.
 - *Survey question 5:* [In order to be an effective teacher leader] how significant is the ability to assist in developing and supporting collaborative teams and collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice?
- **Standard 6:** The teacher leader is able to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement, and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school community.
 - *Survey question 6:* [In order to be an effective teacher leader] how significant is the ability to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school?
- **Standard 7:** The teacher leader is able to inform and facilitate colleagues' selection and design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with

other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning.

- *Survey question 7:* [In order to be an effective teacher leader] how significant is the ability to inform and facilitate colleagues' selection and design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning?
- **Standard 8:** The teacher leader is able to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated and differentiated professional development based on assessed student and teacher needs.
 - *Survey question 8:* [In order to be an effective teacher leader] how significant is the ability to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated and differentiated professional development based on student and teacher needs?

All items in this set of questions measured the connection between perceived effectiveness and the performance skills of teacher leaders as outlined in the Kansas teacher leader standards.

The final question on the survey, which was open-ended, asked: "What additional information would you like to share about the characteristics/skills you have observed in effective teacher leaders?" This question was designed to allow respondents to provide additional information about their perceptions of characteristics/skills present in effective teacher leaders. The responses for this question were compared for similarities and differences.

Validity

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), “validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure” (pp. 181-182). A pilot study was conducted with a panel to establish content validity for the eight survey questions. All members of the panel had worked for District XYZ for at least five years. The panel included four teachers, two administrators, and two teacher leaders. The survey was sent to the panel to determine if it would be comprehensible to the teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders who would be asked to participate in the research. Comments from participants were gathered using a Google doc where each participant could see what other panel members’ comments were, but could not determine who was making the comment. The group members agreed that the survey was clear enough for participants to understand, but expressed some concern that new teachers might have some level of confusion. This concern was addressed by the researcher through the demographic groupings. One reason first year teachers were intentionally separated from the teachers with less than five years of experience was to allow for further analysis of their responses to find potential patterns of confusion. No additional support was provided for new teachers, because the panel members did not recommend any changes in the language of the survey. Their comments can be seen in Appendix D. Panel members agreed to waive their right to participate in the survey when it was distributed.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher initially obtained permission to conduct the study from the Baker University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Copies of the Baker University IRB form and approval letter are included in Appendix E. The researcher then submitted in person

written copies of the Baker University IRB approval letter and the first three chapters of the study to the Department for Educational Research and Assessment for District XYZ. Written permission to conduct the research and disseminate the survey was given to the researcher. Approval letters from the district can be found in Appendix F. In accordance with district preferences, all communication regarding research studies must be disseminated to employees by their direct supervisor. After receiving permission from the district research department to disseminate the survey, the researcher sent letters to principals, followed by e-mails containing the survey link, included in Appendices G and H.

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Quantitative methods were used to analyze the data from the survey, which was automatically entered into an Excel worksheet by the Survey Monkey program. Results were analyzed using SPSS version 19.0. Each research question was addressed by eight hypothesis tests. Each hypothesis is aligned with one of the survey questions. For research questions 1 – 3, a one-sample *t* test was used to test each hypothesis. A level of statistical significance for each hypothesis test was set at .05.

Research Question 1 - Which performance skills of teacher leaders do teachers perceive to significantly contribute to effective practice?

H1- Teachers perceive the ability to apply strategies of adult learning as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H2 - Teachers perceive the ability to advance the skills of colleagues by demonstrating expertise in observational skills and providing quality feedback in

order to support reflective practice as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H3 - Teachers perceive the ability to assist colleagues' abilities to improve the quality of collaboration and interaction with families as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H4 - Teachers perceive the ability to initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for decision making as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H5 - Teachers perceive the ability to assist in developing and supporting collaborative teams and collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H6 - Teachers perceive the ability to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H7 - Teachers perceive the ability to inform and facilitate colleagues' selection and design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H8 - Teachers perceive the ability to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated and differentiated professional development based on student and teacher needs as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

Research Question 2 - Which performance skills of teacher leaders do administrators perceive to significantly contribute to effective practice?

H9 - Administrators perceive the ability to apply strategies of adult learning as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H10 - Administrators perceive the ability to advance the skills of colleagues by demonstrating expertise in observational skills and providing quality feedback in order to support reflective practice as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H11 - Administrators perceive the ability to assist colleagues' abilities to improve the quality of collaboration and interaction with families as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H12 - Administrators perceive the ability to initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for decision making as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H13 - Administrators perceive the ability to assist in developing and supporting collaborative teams and collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H14 - Administrators perceive the ability to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H15 - Administrators perceive the ability to inform and facilitate colleagues' selection and design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of

instruction and student learning as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H16 - Administrators perceive the ability to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated and differentiated professional development based on student and teacher needs as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

Research Question 3 - Which performance skills of teacher leaders do teacher leaders perceive to significantly contribute to effective practice?

H17 - Teacher leaders perceive the ability to apply strategies of adult learning as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H18 - Teacher leaders perceive the ability to advance the skills of colleagues by demonstrating expertise in observational skills and providing quality feedback in order to support reflective practice as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H 19 - Teacher leaders perceive the ability to assist colleagues' abilities to improve the quality of collaboration and interaction with families as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H20 - Teacher leaders perceive the ability to initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for decision making as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H21 - Teacher leaders perceive the ability to assist in developing and supporting collaborative teams and collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H22 - Teacher leaders perceive the ability to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H23 - Teacher leaders perceive the ability to inform and facilitate colleagues' selection and design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

H24 - Teacher leaders perceive the ability to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated and differentiated professional development based on student and teacher needs as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

For each of the eight hypothesis tests for research question 4 a one factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test for differences in perceptions of the significance of the skills present in effective teacher leaders among the responses of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders.

Research Question 4 - How closely are the perceptions of teachers, administrators and teacher leaders aligned with regard to the performance skills?

H25 – Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to apply strategies of adult learning and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned.

H26 – Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to advance the skills of colleagues by demonstrating

expertise in observational skills and providing quality feedback in order to support reflective practice and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned.

H27 – Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to assist colleagues' abilities to improve the quality of collaboration and interaction with families and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned.

H28 – Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for decision making and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned.

H29 – Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to assist in developing and supporting collaborative teams and collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned.

H30 – Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned.

H31 – Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to inform and facilitate colleagues' selection and design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned.

H32 – Teachers’, administrators’, and teacher leaders’ perceptions of the significance of the ability to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated and differentiated professional development based on student and teacher needs and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned.

Limitations

Every research study has limitations. “Limitations of a study are not under the control of the researcher...Limitations may arise from the methodology, data, or method of analysis” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 133). The limitations of this study are as follows:

1. Information regarding steps taken to ensure anonymity was placed in the e-mail containing the survey link, but participants may have overlooked that information.
2. Participants were asked to think of a teacher leader whom they consider to be effective and to respond to all questions based on their perceptions of that individual. It is possible that participants were unable to relate to the idea of an effective teacher leader and responded to the questions without that frame of reference, or participants may have responded to the questions based on their perceptions of their current teacher leader regardless of the perceived effectiveness of that individual.
3. Participants with less than one year of experience, or those new to the district may not have been comfortable completing the survey because the concepts in the questions may have been unfamiliar to them.

4. This sample is exposed to a variety of surveys during the year. The return rate could have been affected by potential participants' willingness to complete the survey.
5. District preferences required the researcher to contact principals with survey information rather than contacting survey participants directly. The style of communication between the principal and the teachers regarding the request to complete the survey is an unknown element.

Summary

This chapter provided an outline of the procedures used in conducting this research. The design of the research was explained and the rationale for using survey data was provided. The population, sample and sampling procedures were identified. This study was purposively limited to a relatively small number of people, given the population of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders who work in American schools. The survey itself was described along with the methods for measuring the data. Validity and reliability are extremely important in educational research. Due to the nature of this research, measures taken to create a survey that could be used reliably and with validity were explained in this chapter. Data collection procedures and structures for obtaining permissions were also detailed. A concise explanation of data analyses and hypothesis testing were explained. Finally, the limitations of the study were listed to highlight potential aspects of the study out of the researcher's control which could impact the results of the study. The results of the data analyses are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Results

This study was conducted to identify the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders from District XYZ regarding the performance skills outlined in the Kansas teacher leader standards that most significantly contribute to the effectiveness of individuals working as teacher leaders, as well as the level of alignment between the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders. The design of this study was survey research. The results of this study are presented in this chapter, which includes descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing, additional analyses and a summary.

Descriptive Statistics

The survey was distributed electronically to elementary administrators in District XYZ via district e-mail in May, 2012. The administrators then sent the survey link to certified teachers and teacher leaders in their buildings. All participation was voluntary. The number of survey participants is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Respondents to the Teacher Leader Perception Survey, May 2012

	<i>N</i>	%
Teachers	130	18.678%
Administrators	26	76.470%
Teacher Leaders	33	97.058%
Total	189	24.738%

Hypothesis Testing

The four research questions from the study are presented in this section along with the results of the tests conducted to identify the significance of each standard according to the different groups from the study population. Following a statistical analysis of the responses for the tests conducted for each research question is a table showing the data comparison within each group. For research question one, the responses from teachers for each survey question associated with the eight Kansas teacher leader standards were tested, as shown in table 7. Administrator responses were tested for research question two as shown in table 8, and teacher leader responses were tested for question three as shown in table 9. For research question four, eight ANOVAs were conducted to compare the responses from teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators for each survey question associated with the eight standards.

Research Question 1: Which performance skills of teacher leaders do teachers perceive to significantly contribute to effective practice? Eight one sample t tests were conducted to address question one. The teachers' responses provided evidence of the significance of each standard from the perspective of this group.

Standard 1: Teachers perceive the ability to apply strategies of adult learning as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. Results of the analysis indicated that teachers' average response ($M = 4.047$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 14.524, df = 128, p = .000$). This means teachers perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 2: Teachers perceive the ability to advance the skills of colleagues by demonstrating expertise in observational skills and providing quality feedback in order to

support reflective practice as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teachers' average response ($M = 4.192$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 15.126$, $df = 129$, $p = .000$). This means teachers perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 3: Teachers perceive the ability to assist colleagues' abilities to improve the quality of collaboration and interaction with families as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teachers' average response ($M = 3.538$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 5.765$, $df = 129$, $p = .000$). This means teachers perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 4: Teachers perceive the ability to initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for decision making as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teachers' average response ($M = 3.539$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 5.855$, $df = 127$, $p = .000$). This means teachers perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 5: Teachers perceive the ability to assist in developing and supporting collaborative teams and collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teachers' average response ($M = 4.016$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 13.700$, $df = 126$, $p = .000$). This means teachers perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 6: Teachers perceive the ability to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teachers' average response ($M = 3.873$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 10.354$, $df = 125$, $p = .000$). This means teachers perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 7: Teachers perceive the ability to inform and facilitate colleagues' selection and design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teachers' average response ($M = 4.016$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 13.320$, $df = 128$, $p = .000$). This means teachers perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 8: Teachers perceive the ability to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated, and differentiated professional development based on student and teacher needs as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teachers' average response ($M = 4.116$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 15.183$, $df = 128$, $p = .000$). This means that teachers perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Table 7

One-Sample Statistics for Teachers

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Standard 1	129	4.047	0.818	14.524	128	.000
Standard 2	130	4.192	0.899	15.126	129	.000
Standard 3	130	3.538	1.065	5.765	129	.000
Standard 4	128	3.539	1.042	5.855	127	.000
Standard 5	127	4.016	0.836	13.700	126	.000
Standard 6	126	3.873	0.946	10.354	125	.000
Standard 7	129	4.016	0.866	13.320	128	.000
Standard 8	129	4.116	0.835	15.183	128	.000

Research Question 2: Which performance skills of teacher leaders do administrators perceive to significantly contribute to effective practice? Eight one sample *t* tests were conducted to address question two. The administrators' responses provided evidence of the significance of each standard from the perspective of this group.

Standard 1: Administrators perceive the ability to apply strategies of adult learning as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. Results of the analysis indicated that administrators' average response ($M = 4.538$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 11.111$, $df = 26$, $p = .000$). This means administrators perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 2: Administrators perceive the ability to advance the skills of colleagues by demonstrating expertise in observational skills and providing quality feedback in order

to support reflective practice as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that administrators' average response ($M = 4.654$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 15.016$, $df = 26$, $p = .000$). This means administrators perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 3: Administrators perceive the ability to assist colleagues' abilities to improve the quality of collaboration and interaction with families as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that administrators' average response ($M = 3.577$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 2.866$, $df = 26$, $p = .008$). This means administrators perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 4: Administrators perceive the ability to initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for decision making as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that administrators' average response ($M = 4.385$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 11.078$, $df = 26$, $p = .000$). This means administrators perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 5: Administrators perceive the ability to assist in developing and supporting collaborative teams and collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that administrators' average response ($M = 4.615$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 12.925$, $df = 26$, $p = .000$). This means administrators perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 6: Administrators perceive the ability to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that administrators' average response ($M = 4.000$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 6.009$, $df = 26$, $p = .000$). This means administrators perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 7: Administrators perceive the ability to inform and facilitate colleagues' selection and design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that administrators' average response ($M = 4.654$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 15.016$, $df = 26$, $p = .000$). This means administrators perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 8: Administrators perceive the ability to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated, and differentiated professional development based on student and teacher needs as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that administrators' average response ($M = 4.654$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 15.016$, $df = 26$, $p = .000$). This means that administrators perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Table 8

One-Sample Statistics for Administrators

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Standard 1	26	4.538	.706	11.111	25	.000
Standard 2	26	4.654	.562	15.016	25	.000
Standard 3	26	3.577	1.027	2.866	25	.008
Standard 4	26	4.385	.637	11.078	25	.000
Standard 5	26	4.615	.637	12.925	25	.000
Standard 6	26	4.000	.849	6.009	25	.000
Standard 7	26	4.654	.562	15.016	25	.000
Standard 8	26	4.654	.562	15.016	25	.000

Research Question 3: Which performance skills of teacher leaders do teacher leaders perceive to significantly contribute to effective practice? Eight one sample *t* tests were conducted to address question three. The teacher leaders' responses provided evidence of the significance of each standard from the perspective of this group.

Standard 1: Teacher leaders perceive the ability to apply strategies of adult learning as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. Results of the analysis indicated that teacher leaders' average response ($M = 4.394$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 9.684$, $df = 32$, $p = .000$). This means teacher leaders perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 2: Teacher leaders perceive the ability to advance the skills of colleagues by demonstrating expertise in observational skills and providing quality feedback in order

to support reflective practice as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice.

The results of the analysis indicated that teacher leaders' average response ($M = 4.303$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 7.160$, $df = 32$, $p = .000$). This means teacher leaders perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 3: Teacher leaders perceive the ability to assist colleagues' abilities to improve the quality of collaboration and interaction with families as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teacher leaders' average response ($M = 3.424$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 2.362$, $df = 32$, $p = .024$). This means teacher leaders perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 4: Teacher leaders perceive the ability to initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for decision making as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teacher leaders' average response ($M = 4.121$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 6.946$, $df = 32$, $p = .000$). This means teacher leaders perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 5: Teacher leaders perceive the ability to assist in developing and supporting collaborative teams and collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teacher leaders' average response ($M = 4.333$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 8.970$, $df = 32$, $p = .000$). This means teacher leaders perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 6: Teacher leaders perceive the ability to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teacher leaders' average response ($M = 3.909$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 5.329$, $df = 32$, $p = .000$). This means teacher leaders perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 7: Teacher leaders perceive the ability to inform and facilitate colleagues' selection and design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teacher leaders' average response ($M = 4.182$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 6.321$, $df = 32$, $p = .000$). This means teacher leaders perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Standard 8: Teacher leaders perceive the ability to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated, and differentiated professional development based on student and teacher needs as a skill significantly contributing to effective practice. The results of the analysis indicated that teacher leaders' average response ($M = 4.515$) was statistically higher than the null value of 3 ($t = 9.265$, $df = 32$, $p = .000$). This means that teacher leaders perceived that this skill contributed significantly to effective practice.

Table 9

One-Sample Statistics for Teacher Leaders

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Standard 1	33	4.394	.827	9.684	32	.000
Standard 2	33	4.303	1.045	7.160	32	.000
Standard 3	33	3.424	1.032	2.362	32	.024
Standard 4	33	4.121	.927	6.946	32	.000
Standard 5	33	4.333	.854	8.970	32	.000
Standard 6	33	3.909	.980	5.329	32	.000
Standard 7	33	4.182	1.074	6.321	32	.000
Standard 8	33	4.515	.939	9.265	32	.000

Research Question 4: To what extent are the perceptions of teachers, administrators and teacher leaders aligned with regard to the performance skills of teacher leaders? Eight one factor ANOVA tests were conducted to address this research question as shown in tables 10 through 17.

Standard 1: Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to apply strategies of adult learning and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned. Results of the ANOVA test conducted to compare teacher, administrator, and teacher leader perceptions of the significance of this standard indicated a statistically significant difference between at least two means ($F = 5.506$, $df = 2, 185$, $p = .005$). The follow up post hoc, Tukey's HSD, provided evidence that administrators (M

= 4.539) perceived the skill of being able to apply strategies of adult learning as more significant for effective practice than teachers ($M = 4.047$).

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics by Position for Standard One

Position	<i>df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teacher	129	4.047	.818
Teacher Leader	33	4.394	.826
Administrator	26	4.539	.706

Standard 2: Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to advance the skills of colleagues by demonstrating expertise in observational skills and providing quality feedback in order to support reflective practice and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned. Results of the ANOVA test conducted to compare teacher, administrator, and teacher leader perceptions of the significance of this standard indicated a marginally significant difference between at least two means ($F = 2.939$, $df = 2, 186$, $p = .055$). Even though the evidence was mixed because the F was only marginally significant, Tukey is a very conservative test and the significant finding can be trusted. The follow up post hoc, Tukey's HSD, provided evidence that administrators ($M = 4.654$) perceived this skill as more significant for effective practice than teachers ($M = 4.192$).

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics by Position for Standard Two

Position	<i>df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teacher	130	4.192	.899
Teacher Leader	33	4.303	1.045
Administrator	26	4.654	.562

Standard 3: Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to assist colleagues' abilities to improve the quality of collaboration and interaction with families and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned. Results of the ANOVA test conducted to compare teacher, administrator, and teacher leader perceptions of the significance of this standard indicated no statistically significant differences were present between groups ($F = .193$, $df = 2, 186$, $p = .825$). There is no evidence of differences among the perceptions of the three groups about the importance of the skill. A follow up post hoc, Tukey's HSD, was not warranted.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics by Position for Standard Three

Position	<i>df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teacher	130	3.539	1.065
Teacher Leader	33	3.424	1.032
Administrator	26	3.578	1.027

Standard 4: Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for decision making and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned. Results of the ANOVA test conducted to compare teacher, administrator, and teacher leader perceptions of the significance of this standard indicated a statistically significant difference between more than two means ($F = 10.852$, $df = 2$, 184 , $p = .000$). The follow up Post hoc, Tukey's HSD, provided evidence that administrators ($M = 4.385$) and teacher leaders ($M = 4.121$) perceived this skill as more significant for effective practice than teachers ($M = 3.539$).

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics by Position for Standard Four

Position	<i>df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teacher	128	3.539	1.042
Teacher Leader	33	4.121	.927
Administrator	26	4.385	.637

Standard 5: Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to assist in developing and supporting collaborative teams and collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned. Results of the ANOVA test conducted to compare teacher, administrator, and teacher leader perceptions of the significance of this standard indicated a statistically significant difference between at least two means ($F = 6.797$, $df = 2$, 183 , $p = .001$). The follow up post hoc, Tukey's HSD, provided evidence that administrators (M

= 4.615) perceived this skill as more significant for effective practice than teachers ($M = 4.016$).

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics by Position for Standard Five

Position	<i>Df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teacher	127	4.016	.836
Teacher Leader	33	4.333	.854
Administrator	26	4.615	.637

Standard 6: Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned. Results of the ANOVA test conducted to compare teacher, administrator, and teacher leader perceptions of the significance of this standard indicated no statistically significant differences were present between groups ($F = .200$, $df = 2, 182$, $p = .819$). A follow up post hoc, Tukey's HSD, was not warranted.

Table 15

Descriptive Statistics by Position for Standard Six

Position	<i>Df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teacher	126	3.873	.946
Teacher Leader	33	3.909	.979
Administrator	26	4.000	.849

Standard 7: Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to inform and facilitate colleagues' selection and design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned. Results of the ANOVA test conducted to compare teacher, administrator, and teacher leader perceptions of the significance of this standard indicated a statistically significant difference between at least two means ($F = 5.857, df = 2, 185, p = .003$). The follow up post hoc, Tukey's HSD, provided evidence that administrators ($M = 4.654$) perceived this skill as more significant for effective practice than teachers ($M = 4.016$).

Table 16

Descriptive Statistics by Position for Standard Seven

Position	<i>df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teacher	129	4.016	.866
Teacher Leader	33	4.181	1.074
Administrator	26	4.654	.562

Standard 8: Teachers', administrators', and teacher leaders' perceptions of the significance of the ability to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated and differentiated professional development based on student and teacher needs and teacher leader effectiveness are not aligned. Results of the ANOVA test conducted to compare teacher, administrator, and teacher leader perceptions of the significance of this standard indicated a statistically significant difference between more

than two means ($F = 6.526$, $df = 2, 185$, $p = .002$). The follow up post hoc, Tukey's HSD, provided evidence that administrators ($M = 4.654$) and teacher leaders ($M = 4.515$) perceived this skill as more significant for effective practice than teachers ($M = 4.116$).

Table 17

Descriptive Statistics by Position for Standard Eight

Position	<i>df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teacher	129	4.116	.835
Teacher Leader	33	4.515	.939
Administrator	26	4.654	.562

Qualitative Analysis Results

The final question of the survey, “What additional information would you like to share about the characteristics/skills you have observed in effective teacher leaders?” was open ended. Over half ($n = 121$, 64.021%) of the survey respondents elected to provide a response for this question. The final question was not directly linked to any of the four research questions which formed the basis for this study. The responses for this question were predominantly connected to Kansas teacher leader standards one and two: Standard 1: The teacher leader is able to apply strategies of adult learning across teacher leadership activities.

Standard 2: The teacher leader is able to advance the professional skills of colleagues by demonstrating and applying expertise in observational skills and in providing quality feedback in order to support reflective practice focused on improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The two strongest themes were the importance of the professional knowledge base of a teacher leader ($n = 22$, 18.181%) and the ability to establish professional relationships ($n = 20$, 16.528%). The themes which emerged at a slightly lower frequency were the ability to offer the right type of support and provide effective feedback ($n = 14$, 11.570%), the importance of effective communication skills ($n = 13$, 10.743%), modeling for teachers ($n = 13$, 10.743%), and being highly visible ($n = 13$, 10.743%). From there, the responses were widely varied, ranging from needing to be intelligent or mature, to being willing to go out and find information for a teacher.

Summary

Chapter four included descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing, and additional analyses. Findings from the research indicate that the standards found to contribute most significantly to effective teacher leader practice were most closely connected with student achievement. The standards found to be less significant contributors to effective practice were associated with families, other stakeholders or action research. These findings indicate that to be perceived as effective, teacher leaders need the skills of understanding adult learning theory, providing quality feedback from observations, supporting collaborative teams, interpreting and effectively utilizing assessments, and designing and delivering differentiated professional development.

Chapter Five

Interpretation and Recommendations

In this study, the perceptions of three groups of people who have familiarity with one model of teacher leadership within the same urban school district were examined. In an urban district, such as District XYZ, the struggle to meet or exceed performance standards established by the greater educational system can be challenging. Establishing teacher leaders as a support system was one way district officials attempted to improve academic achievement and narrow the achievement gap. In Robbins & Ramos-Pell's (2010) words,

When the status quo is no longer an option at a struggling school, and the consequence of conformity yields persistent failure, it is time to move to a shared leadership model. Teacher leaders believe that all students can succeed. They also believe that all teachers need collaborative support to help their students realize that goal of success. (p. 1)

States and districts around the country are beginning to explore and define teacher leadership in many different forms. The educational state department of Kansas published standards for teacher leaders and created a teacher leader endorsement to add to a teaching license (KSDE, 2008). They were the first state to publish standards for teacher leaders (TELC, n.d.).

Study Summary

The perceptions of people familiar with a model of teacher leadership were explored in this study in conjunction with the newly created Kansas teacher leader standards. The participants were asked to identify the most important skills a teacher

leader should possess as defined in the language of the standards. In chapter five, the information previously presented such as the overview of the problem which established a need for this study, the purpose of the study and the research questions are reviewed. A synthesis of the findings and connections to the research used in the study are included in this chapter. Finally, in chapter five, the implications for action and recommendations for additional connected research are discussed.

Overview of the Problem. Urban districts have challenges unique to their environment. Districts with achievement gaps are forced to identify the appropriate resources needed to help improve student achievement on their own. Educators in District XYZ have worked to close the local achievement gap between students who perform at or above expected norms and especially those in poverty and underprivileged populations who perform below the expected norms for many years. One strategy for closing the gap was hiring teacher leaders to work on-site with teachers as an instructional intervention. Academic achievement has improved, but teacher leaders and district officials would benefit from knowing which performance skills from the Kansas teacher leader standards are most valued by those with whom the teacher leaders work in order to best evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy. More research connected to the teacher leader role in urban schools as associated with teacher leader standards is necessary.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions. The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders from District XYZ regarding the performance skills outlined in the Kansas teacher leader standards that most significantly contribute to the effectiveness of individuals working as teacher

leaders, as well as the level of alignment between the perceptions of teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators. The research questions were designed to examine the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders regarding performance skills of teacher leaders which significantly contribute to effective practice, as well as the level of alignment between the groups.

Review of the Methodology. This research study utilized a survey created by the researcher to measure perceptions of the three targeted groups; teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders. The survey questions were derived from the Kansas teacher leader standards. Data were collected electronically through Survey Monkey, a web-based survey tool. Compiled data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using SPSS version 20.0.

Major Findings. The perceptions of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders showed some differences. The perceptions were tested against a null value of 3. The *t* tests showed that all groups rated every standard as significant. The following five standards were rated as significantly higher than 3 by every group as evidenced by the results of the *t* test, indicating each group identified these skills as highly significant for an effective teacher leader:

Standard 1: The teacher leader is able to apply strategies of adult learning across teacher leadership activities.

Standard 2: The teacher leader is able to advance the professional skills of colleagues by demonstrating and applying expertise in observational skills and in providing quality feedback in order to support reflective practice focused on improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Standard 5: The teacher leader is able to develop and support collaborative teams and promote collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice.

Standard 7: The teacher leader is able to inform and facilitate colleagues' selection and design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning.

Standard 8: The teacher leader is able to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated, and differentiated professional development based on assessed student and teacher needs.

The standards in this group are all directly related to work a teacher leader would do with a teacher to support academic achievement and growth for students. This finding correlates with the additional analyses as well, as the majority of the comments from the last question were connected to standards 1 and 2 which are in this group.

In contrast, the following three standards were rated lowest by at least one group, indicating a lack of alignment between groups.

Standard three had the lowest overall rating. All groups rated this standard between 3.0 and 4.0. Standard 3: The teacher leader is able to improve the quality of colleagues' collaboration and interaction with families and other stakeholders.

Standard four was rated below 4.0 by teachers but above 4.0 by both administrators and teacher leaders. Standard 4: The teacher leader is able to initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for individual and group decision making.

Standard six was rated below 4.0 by teachers and teacher leaders, but above 4.0 by administrators. Standard 6: The teacher leader is able to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement, and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school community.

The standards in this group identify skills that would assist a teacher, but are potentially not as directly linked to instruction or academic achievement as the other standards which were rated higher. These results suggest that survey respondents did not value these skills as much as the skills more connected to direct instruction.

Another finding for this study is from a comparison among three groups. Administrator mean scores were consistently higher than teachers for standards one, two, four, five, seven, and eight. Administrator and teacher leader scores were not different for any standard. Teacher leader mean responses were significantly higher than teachers for standards four and eight. This finding implies that administrators value the teacher leader as a leader in the building and find connections between the skills identified in the Kansas teacher leader standards and the work of the current teacher leaders in District XYZ.

Findings Related to the Literature

The research findings from this study indicate that all teacher leader standards were found to be statistically significant by the sample surveyed. The standards associated more directly with student achievement were rated consistently higher by all groups in the survey sample, with ratings above 4.0 for all five standards. The standards associated with families, action research, and the greater educational population (three, four, and six) were rated lower than the student centered standards. As noted above,

administrators and teacher leaders rated standard four higher than teachers. The differences among the three groups for standard three and standard six were not statistically significant. The ratings varied between a low rating of 3.538 by teachers for standard three and a high rating of 4.385 by administrators for standard four.

Standards Associated Directly with Student Achievement. Student achievement is at the heart of school improvement. Brady (2007) found that good teaching could significantly improve learning even among the most disadvantaged students (p. 47). The results of this study indicate that the role of teacher leader should be focused mainly on instruction and student achievement. Most of the Kansas teacher leader standards are directly connected to supporting instruction and student achievement. The respondents in this study perceived the following standards as significant skills effective teacher leaders need to master.

Standard One. Teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders all agreed that the skill of applying strategies of adult learning across activities was highly significant. However, there was a statistically significant difference between two groups. Administrators perceived this skill as more significant than teachers. These findings are aligned with the emphasis Drago-Severson (2008) placed on the importance of having a knowledge base about the needs of adult learners (p. 62). In order to function effectively as a support for teachers in a leadership role, it is important to understand how to team, mentor, provide opportunities for others to participate in leadership roles and to engage in collegial inquiry together (Drago-Severson, 2008, p. 62). Adults need opportunities to learn from others in a supportive yet challenging atmosphere.

In Marzano, Waters, and McNulty's (2005) extensive analysis of research on school leadership, they identified collegiality and professionalism as factors vitally impacting school performance (pp. 88-89). They further explained, "In operation, collegiality and professionalism are a function of implicit or explicit norms of behavior among staff members. These norms serve to create relationships that are professional in nature while also being cordial and friendly" (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005, p. 89). Teacher leaders can contribute to the overall collegial atmosphere in a school by organizing and facilitating opportunities for collaboration among staff members. However, in Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin's (1995) findings,

few schools are structured to allow teachers to think in terms of shared problems or broader organizational goals. A collaborative culture of problem solving and learning must be created to challenge these norms and habits of mind; collegiality must be valued as a professional asset. (p. 22)

Teacher leaders need to work with administrators and teachers to create a community of collaboration where the needs of adult learners are a priority.

Standard Two. Teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders agreed that the skill of knowing how to advance professional skills through observation and feedback was marginally significant for an effective teacher leader. However, there was a statistically significant difference between two groups. Administrators perceived this skill as more significant than teachers. While teachers had consistently lower means than administrators, they too recognized and valued the importance of feedback focused on improvement. There are many ways a teacher leader can learn what is happening in classrooms, but the most informative and direct way is to be in the classroom with the

teacher and the students (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2011, p. 49). Brady (2007) emphasized the importance of establishing trust between the teacher and the teacher leader.

“Teachers must trust coaches as another pair of eyes and ears gauging how their instruction affects learners — but without fear of punitive reporting to the principal” (Brady, 2007, p. 47). Careful planning on the part of the teacher leader can enhance the observation with feedback cycle experience and alleviate discomfort until effective, comfortable working relationships are established.

To analyze and make changes, teachers need to engage in reflection. Yopp et al. (2011), describe reflection as a joint effort between a teacher and the observer providing feedback. They also emphasize the need for shared responsibility in the reflection process (p.51). The teacher leader’s focus should be on supporting and strengthening instruction regardless of the teacher’s current abilities. It is important to start where a person is and move forward from that point. Hohenbrink et al. (2011), emphasized the importance of working collaboratively with teachers due to the discrepancy between the power of an administrator and the lack of positional power of a teacher leader (p. 44).

Standard Five. Teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders all agreed that knowledge of how to develop and support teams was highly significant for an effective teacher leader. These findings indicate that a positive environment of collaboration and collegiality is important to all groups. However, there was a statistically significant difference between two groups. Administrators perceived this skill as more significant than teachers. As Morgan, Williams and Plesec (2011) found, teacher leaders can help facilitate team meetings with the common understanding that open conversation about the

relationship between teaching and learning will occur, helping the teacher and teacher leader to become experts for one another (p.31).

Research has demonstrated the value of collaboration in urban schools. In Hollins (2006) work with the Urban Literacy Institute, she emphasized the importance of casting off assumptions that barriers to learning reside in the students and instead becoming a team of teachers who are collectively responsible for the education of all students (p.48). Effective interactions between staff members in a school can contribute to overall student performance. In Marzano's (2003) meta-analysis of factors which contribute to success in schools, he found that studies linking a relationship between school climate and student achievement focused on collegiality and professionalism (p. 61). These two factors together are found to be in the top five factors identified by research as influences on student achievement (Marzano, 2003, p. 19).

Standard Seven. Teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders all found the skills of designing, using and interpreting assessments to contribute highly significantly to effective practice. However, there was a statistically significant difference between two groups. Administrators perceived this skill as more significant than teachers. The analysis of data and instructional decisions which result from that analysis can directly impact student performance. In Schmoker's (2009) research, he found that teachers are learning that data helps set and identify priorities for improvement, and that formally measuring and publicizing the weaknesses present in a school establishes a sense of urgency (p.70). Teachers today are immersed in data. Simply having data is insufficient; data must be used intentionally and purposefully to impact student achievement.

Buhle and Blachowicz (2009) caution that assuming teachers would be able to analyze data and use it to inform instruction without coaching and support would be a far too simplistic approach. Data analysis has become a vital aspect of teaching. Teacher leaders can play an important role in data collection, analysis and interpretation. Steel & Boudett's (2009) work focused on collaborative use of data. They found three major benefits associated with a collaborative approach to data use: organizational learning, improved internal accountability, and a safety net for professional growth (p. 56). A focus of their work was to help teachers learn to facilitate data meetings. Teacher leaders can model the process and build leadership skills of colleagues by helping them to feel comfortable and prepared to facilitate data meetings. Data has recently become an important tool in professional development, to help teachers learn in an authentic, meaningful way.

Standard Eight. Teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders agreed that the skill of designing and implementing effective professional development was highly significant for effective teacher leaders. However, there was a statistically significant difference between two groups. Administrators perceived this skill as more significant than teachers. Most researchers agree the main goal of professional development is to build fundamental knowledge and skills. Gleason (2010) proposed keeping in mind the needs of adult learners when identifying processes aligned with content for use within professional development sessions (p. 47). School leaders play an integral part in planning and supporting professional development. Teacher leaders are typically integrally involved in both the design and delivery of professional development. Responsibility for arranging and protecting time for professional learning falls to the

school leader. Once time has been established, Gleason (2010) recommended keeping standards for content high to ensure that the content of the professional learning is relevant and rigorous (p. 47).

Participation in professional development is typically mandatory. Active participation with intent to learn cannot be mandated. Time spent in professional development activities must yield results. Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) criticized the general design of professional development as something that is done *to* teachers instead of including them (p. 17). Professional development design and delivery has changed during the past few decades. Experts like Fullan (2007) agree change is necessary. “The notion that external ideas alone will result in changes in the classroom and school is deeply flawed as a theory of action” (p. 35). Professional development cannot be simply a dissemination of ideas. In order to meet teachers’ needs, professional development sessions should be redesigned. “The future of improvement, indeed of the profession itself, depends on a radical shift in how we conceive learning and the conditions under which teachers and students work” (Fullan, 2007, p. 35). Teacher leaders and other professional developers need to learn from research to improve their work with teachers in this area. Researchers contend professional development should connect strongly to specific needs of teachers. One of the best ways to create connections is to embed the learning into daily work. “Job-embedded professional learning time also supports the kind of context-specific professional learning and action research that is effective in catalyzing change” (Wei, Andree, & Darling-Hammond, 2009, p. 30). Ongoing, relevant learning is more likely to impact specific change.

Standards Not Associated Directly with Student Achievement. School leaders have to think about more than instruction. However, as the results of this study indicate, the role of teacher leader should be focused mainly on instruction and student achievement. Some of the Kansas teacher leader standards support general school improvement efforts, but are not as connected to instruction. The respondents in this study did not perceive the following standards as significant skills effective teacher leaders need to master.

Standard Three. Teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders all found the skill of supporting colleagues as they work with families and other stakeholders to be significant, but this standard had the overall lowest mean for every group. There was no statistically significant difference between groups. “Most schools strive for a mutually collaborative relationship between educators and parents, yet attaining this goal remains elusive for many. The means to establishing a home-school partnership is positive communication” (Martin & Hagan-Burke, 2002, para. 25.). Strong communication skills are fostered and strengthened in a collaborative environment. Teacher leaders can help teachers see how collaborative communication skills they use with colleagues can help create more effective communication with parents. Research indicates that establishing home-school partnerships in urban schools is very important. There are unique challenges in urban schools. Urban parents are increasingly mobile and difficult to contact. This can cause frustration and resentment towards these parents (Musti-Rao & Cartledge, 2004, para. 3.). Veteran teachers and teacher leaders in urban schools understand the differing needs of urban families. They understand that communication needs to be “clear, consistent, and positive, and parents need to believe that they play an

important role in their children's learning” (Musti-Rao & Cartledge, 2004, para. 3.)

Overcoming communication barriers is a challenge, but the benefits outweigh the struggle. Ultimately, the goal of strengthening home-school relationships is to enhance the educational experience for children. “Children who are aware of the collaborative relationship know that parents and teachers care about their education. They are more likely to do their best academically and exhibit good behavior in class” (Musti-Rao & Cartledge, 2004, para. 23.). Teacher leaders can help teachers understand better how to foster the type of environment that will be open and welcoming to parents. They can also educate teachers about what researchers have learned about teachers and families working together. Teachers who learn to work successfully with families will create the right environment for students to be successful. Educational research gives us both a historical perspective and new possibilities.

Standard Four. Administrators and teacher leaders perceived the significance of the skills of implementing and analyzing action research from standard four as more significant than teachers. This result suggested that administrators and teacher leaders value the ability to assist in the design and implementation of action research more than teachers. Educational researchers have promoted the idea of implementing research practices in schools for years. “The process of teaching is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The system within which we operate demands that quality of work be represented as quantitative measures and as teachers, we are accountable for student success” (Rinaldo, 2005, para. 12). Allen and Calhoun’s (1998) research indicated that “In schools that incorporated school-wide action research into the life of the school, teachers reported that their participation in such research helped them focus their

attention on teaching and learning issues that, in turn, directly affected students” (para. 24).

Teachers unfamiliar with action research can benefit from leaders interested in the inquiry process. Teacher leaders can help teachers understand the value and importance of research, and assist with planning and preparation. Hatch (2006) promoted organizing a plan and creating a design for the research is foundational to effective implementation of action research (p. 1). Action research is best conducted in a collaborative format.

“Effective action research leadership teams generally consisted of teacher leaders who worked closely with school administrators” (Allen & Calhoun, 1998, para. 22.).

Teachers and teacher leaders who have learned to collaborate successfully can use their collaboration skills to explore issues together.

Standard Six. Teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders did not agree on the significance of the skills of identifying and advocating for opportunities for educational improvement for effective teacher leaders. However, there was a statistically significant difference between two groups. Administrators perceived this skill as more significant than teachers. Educators are the ones who need to impact change in schools. “Many thousands of educators across the nation believe that they can make no serious decisions about their work. This frustration is common among not only classroom teachers, but also school leaders at every level” (Davis, 2004, para.1). Teachers need to feel some autonomy in the decision making process. Fullan and Hargreaves’ (1996) concluded that proposals for change will come to nothing unless teachers adopt them in their own classrooms and translate them into practice (p. 13).

Change is the basis for school reform. Current approaches to change favor establishing a collaborative environment. “Collaborative cultures create and sustain more satisfying and productive work environments. By empowering teachers and reducing the uncertainties of the job that must otherwise be faced in isolation, collaborative cultures facilitate commitment to change and improvement” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 49). Teacher leaders can impact the formation and continuation of a collaborative approach in a school. As Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) found, leadership can be fostered among all teachers within a collaborative environment. “In the fully functioning collaborative school, many (indeed all) teachers are leaders” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 51). Change happens in different ways, but modern researchers include some type of data in all elements of measurement regarding the effect of change.

Conclusions

Pressures and demands on school leaders are greater now than in years past. Leaders are expected to support teachers in their efforts to improve student achievement.

The era of a single leader in a school or district is over – one person cannot do the enormous task required. For the sake of sustainability of school reform movements in schools, we must develop teacher leaders to stand beside principals, working hand-in-hand to make positive change in schools.

(Hohenbrink et al. 2011, p. 44)

The formal recognition of a defined role of a teacher leader is relatively new. Kansas was the first state to publish teacher leader standards (TELC, n.d.). The Kansas teacher leader standards were at the center of focus in this study (KSDE, 2008). The research participants in this study have worked with teachers who were formally placed

in leadership roles in their elementary schools. All surveyed participants work(ed) in District XYZ, which has employed teachers in formal leadership roles for over nine years. One goal of this researcher was to contribute to existing literature about teacher leaders and provide information for state departments and universities as they plan for coursework to support the teacher leader endorsement process. An additional focus of intent for this research was to provide information for District XYZ leaders by identifying the performance skills teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders thought were most closely connected to effective practice of teacher leaders. District officials could use this information to identify support they could provide for teacher leaders to help them perform their jobs most effectively.

Implications for Action. Based on the results of this research study, district officials should ensure that teacher leaders have a strong understanding of the needs of adults, and how to work effectively with them. Establishing effective communication and mutually respectful and productive relationships with adults is important. Most adults won't consent to enter into a learning context with someone who does not communicate effectively and treat others respectfully. Strong communication skills and the ability to establish effective relationships were the two strongest themes among the comments from the open ended response option on the survey. This would suggest that the ability to form positive relationships is a foundational skill for teacher leaders.

Knowledge of how to work effectively with adult learners includes understanding how adult learning styles differ from children's learning styles. Brookfield's (1986) work showed that adults enter any learning context voluntarily, even if they are required to be present. As such, participation can be discontinued quickly if the information is not

viewed as matching a need, or if the participant feels a lack of respect from the presenter (p.12). This type of information is not taught in undergraduate teacher education programs. Districts that employ teachers as teacher leaders need to provide leadership training which includes developing an understanding of how to work effectively with adult learner.

Another implication for action based on this study is that teacher leaders need to be able to apply the knowledge of the concepts of adult learning to the design and implementation of professional development. Teachers who want to excel need deliberate, ongoing professional learning opportunities (Gleason, 2010, p. 47). Teacher leaders need to be able to accurately identify the professional needs of the teachers with whom he or she works. The professional development sessions need to be continually analyzed for effectiveness and the teacher leader needs to have the appropriate knowledge base to adjust appropriately. District officials supporting teacher leaders need to provide training for teacher leaders to ensure they are able to designing and implementing professional development which impacts both teacher and student performance.

Teacher leaders need support in order to understand how to advance the skills of colleagues through quality observation and feedback. This is a challenging yet vital aspect of the teacher leader job. Killion & Harrison (2006) encourage the teacher leader to negotiate his or her stance during the observation feedback cycle with the teacher prior to the observation. The teacher leader can function as an expert or as a source for reflective analysis of practice (p. 55). The teacher leader has to help the teacher

understand the difference between the observation feedback cycle he or she will use and the evaluation cycle the administrator will use with the teachers.

Another implication for action is for district officials in charge of supporting teacher leaders to help to develop the skill of promoting collegial interactions among staff members by developing and supporting collaborative teams. Teacher leaders should use knowledge of individual team members' characteristics to help develop collaborative teams. They should be able to guide purposeful interactions honoring team members' ideas and perspectives. Teacher leaders need to know and use structures and processes for collaborative teams that promote collegiality and result in improved practice (KSDE, 2008).

Teacher leaders need to be able to design and select appropriate assessment measures for a variety of purposes. They need to understand how to analyze and interpret data to inform instructional improvement. Teacher leaders need to be able to help teachers examine data to identify their students' strengths and weaknesses and transfer that analysis into a process of selecting and implementing instructional strategies or structures effectively to address identified needs (Killion & Harrison, 2006, p. 35). District officials responsible for supporting teacher leaders need to provide training to support the teacher leader's readiness to function as an effective data coach.

Recommendations for Future Research. The goal of this study was to examine the perceptions of a group of educational professionals who have worked with teachers in formal leadership roles for many years. This group was asked to compare the skills perceived to exist in effective teacher leaders with the skills outlined in the Kansas teacher leader standards. Consequently, the limitations placed on this study by the

researcher make the results applicable to the greater educational population, but could be tailored to better suit other districts or states by modifying elements of the research process. The following recommendations were generated by the researcher after examining the results of the current study.

The researcher focused a considerable amount of attention in this study on the characteristics of an urban school environment with an achievement gap. The first recommendation is to replicate this study in a distinctly different setting. The sample could be from a wealthy, high performing suburban district, an average performing suburban district, a high, average, or low performing rural school district or a much larger urban district. Educational professionals who work in a different setting could have different perceptions from the sample of people surveyed for this study.

One of the foundational reasons for selecting this topic was the interest of the researcher around the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders who have had experience working with teacher leaders for many years. The teacher leaders in District XYZ worked as teacher leaders before standards ever existed. The second recommendation is to replicate this study in a district that has not implemented a teacher leader or instructional coach position. The information gathered could function as a cross comparison with the research conducted here to determine if the personal experience of working with someone who is functioning in the teacher leader role impacts perceptions regarding the skills needed to be an effective teacher leader.

The demographic information gathered for this study was very limited. The researcher wanted to reduce possible concerns about potential loss of anonymity. Both the administrator group and the teacher leader group were small enough that with

additional demographic information such as ethnicity, gender, or age of participant, the researcher could have identified individuals and connected them with their responses.

The third recommendation is to collect more specific demographic information to increase the opportunities for data analysis. This type of demographic information could provide data for multiple comparisons of different groups of participants.

This study was conducted in one school district mainly because the researcher had familiarity with the district. The fourth recommendation is to replicate the research study with much larger groups of people. This could be accomplished by surveying professionals in districts in regions of a state, or at the state level as a whole. A larger sample would create a data pool that could be considered a more accurate representation of the greater population of elementary educational professionals.

This sample was limited to the elementary level. From the researcher's perspective as an individual employed as a teacher leader for the past ten years, the teacher leaders in District XYZ at the elementary, middle and high school level functioned very differently in terms of the type of support provided for teachers. For this reason, the researcher did not choose to survey the entire district. The fifth recommendation is to expand the data pool by including other levels. The differentiated responses could have been more valuable to district officials in terms of designing and selecting support systems than what is available from the results of this study.

Concluding Remarks. The standards found to contribute most significantly to effective teacher leader practice were most closely connected with student achievement. The standards found to be less significant contributors to effective practice were associated with families, other stakeholders or action research. This would suggest that

district leaders should examine teacher leader support systems to ensure that teacher leaders understand adult learning theories, can observe and provide effective feedback, are able to provide effective professional development support, can design and support collaborative teams, and can help teachers utilize assessments effectively. Teacher leaders need their own professional support to learn how to most effectively support teachers (Johnson & Donaldson, 2007, p.13). District officials all over the country can use the information from this study to help plan appropriate support for teacher leaders.

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Appendix A

National Teacher Leader Standard Domains

Domain I: Understanding Adults as Learners to Create Communities of Learning

Domain II: Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Outcomes

Domain III: Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement

Domain IV: Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning

Domain V: Using Assessments and Data for Systemic Improvement

Domain VI: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community

Domain VII: Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession

Appendix B

Kansas Teacher Leader Standards

Standard 1: The teacher leader is able to apply strategies of adult learning across teacher leadership activities.

Knowledge: The teacher leader demonstrates knowledge of . . .

The differences in knowledge acquisition and transfer for children and adults

Stages of career development and learning for colleagues

Effective use of individual and group interactions such as collaboration, networking, facilitation, team building, and conflict resolution

Effective listening, oral communication, presentation skills, and expression in written communication

Research and exemplary practice on “organizational change and innovation”

Performance: The teacher leader . . .

Demonstrates knowledge and skills for high quality professional learning for individuals as well as groups

Assesses teachers’ content knowledge and skills throughout professional learning

Fosters mutually respectful and productive relationships among colleagues

Uses effective communication skills and processes

Demonstrates the ability to adapt to the contextual situation and make effective decisions

Demonstrates knowledge of the role of creativity, innovation, and flexibility in the change process

Improves colleagues’ acquisition and application of knowledge and skills

Standard 2: The teacher leader is able to advance the professional skills of colleagues by demonstrating and applying expertise in observational skills and in providing quality feedback in order to support reflective practice focused on improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Knowledge: The teacher leader demonstrates knowledge of . . .

Research-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment and their alignment with desired outcomes

Models and protocols for effective observation and feedback

Role and use of critical reflection in improving professional practice

Performance: The teacher leader . . .

Recognizes, analyzes, and works toward improving the quality of colleagues’ professional and instructional practices

Uses effective observation techniques to identify opportunities to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment

Provides observational feedback that demonstrates the intent to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment

Develops, leads and promotes a culture of self-reflection and reflective dialogue

Applies mentoring as well as coaching practices to support colleagues’ individual and group professional improvement and career development

Standard 3: The teacher leader is able to improve the quality of colleagues' collaboration and interaction with families and other stakeholders.

Knowledge: The teacher leader demonstrates knowledge of. . .

Child development and conditions in the home, culture and community and their influence on educational processes

Contextual considerations of the family, school, and community and their interaction with educational processes

Effective strategies for involvement of families and other stakeholders as part of a responsive culture

Performance: The teacher leader. . .

Develops colleagues' abilities to form effective relationships with families and other stakeholders

Recognizes, responds and adapts to contextual considerations to create effective interactions among families, communities, and schools

Improves educational outcomes by promoting effective interaction and involvement of teachers, families, and stakeholders in the educational process

Standard 4: The teacher leader is able to initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for individual and group decision making.

Knowledge: The teacher leader demonstrates knowledge of. . .

Action research methodology

Analysis of research data and development of a data-driven action plan that reflects relevance and rigor

Implementation strategies for research-based change and for dissemination of findings for programmatic changes

Performance: The teacher leader. . .

Models and facilitates relevant and targeted action research

Models and facilitates analysis and application of research findings to improve educational outcomes

Engages colleagues in identifying research questions as well as designing and conducting action research to improve educational outcomes

Facilitates the analysis of data for informed decision making to improve educational results with a focus on increased productivity, effectiveness and accountability

Assists with application and supports dissemination of action research findings to improve educational outcomes

Standard 5: The teacher leader is able to develop and support collaborative teams and promote collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice.

Knowledge: The teacher leader demonstrates knowledge of. . .

- Collaboration, facilitation, team building, and conflict resolution techniques
- Influence of individual characteristics on group interactions
- Structures and processes for collaborative work
- The process of development of group goals and objectives

Performance: The teacher leader. . .

- Facilitates development of a responsive culture with shared vision, values, and responsibility
- Applies understanding of team members' characteristics to develop collaborative teams
- Guides purposeful collaborative interactions, inclusive of team members' ideas and perspectives
- Promotes team-based responsibility for assessing and advancing the effectiveness of practice
- Creates structures and processes for collaborative teams that promote collegiality and result in improved practice

Standard 6: The teacher leader is able to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement, and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school community

Knowledge: The teacher leader demonstrates knowledge of. . .

- Effective identification and interpretation of data, research findings, and exemplary practices
- Alignment of opportunities with identified needs
- Synthesis of information to support a proposal for educational improvement
- Local, state and national policy decisions and their influence on instruction
- The process to impact policy and to advocate on behalf of students and the community

Performance: The teacher leader. . .

- Identifies and evaluates needs and opportunities
- Generates ideas to effectively address solutions/needs
- Analyzes feasibility of potential solutions and relevant policy context
- Advocates effectively and responsibly to relevant audiences for realization of opportunities

Standard 7: The teacher leader is able to inform and facilitate colleagues' selection or design, use, and interpretation of multiple assessments, along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning.

Knowledge: The teacher leader demonstrates knowledge of . . .

- Design and selection of suitable evaluation instruments and effective assessment practices for a range of purposes

- Analysis and interpretation of data from multiple sources

- Use of formative and summative data to inform the continuous improvement process

Performance: The teacher leader. . .

- Informs and facilitates colleagues' selection or design of suitable evaluation instruments to generate data that will inform instructional improvement

- Informs and facilitates colleagues' interpretation of data and application of findings from multiple sources (e.g., standardized assessments, demographics and other relevant sources) to guide instructional decisions and improve educational practice

Standard 8: The teacher leader is able to inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated and differentiated professional development based on assessed student and teacher needs.

Knowledge: The teacher leader demonstrates knowledge of . . .

- Selection and evaluation of professional development resources appropriate to the identified need(s) along the professional career continuum.

- The standards of high quality professional development and their relevance to improved learning

- Application of the concepts of adult learning to the design and implementation of professional development

- Effective use of professional development needs assessment, designs, protocols, and evaluation tools

- The role of 21st century skills and technologies in educational practice

- The role of shifting cultural demographics in educational practice

Performance: The teacher leader. . .

- Accurately identifies the professional development needs and opportunities for colleagues in the service of improving education

- Works with staff and staff developers to design and implement ongoing professional learning based on assessed teacher and student needs

- Involves colleagues in development and implementation of a coherent, systemic, and integrated approach to professional development aligned with school improvement goals

- Utilizes and facilitates the use of technology and media literacy as appropriate

Continually assesses the effectiveness of professional development activities and adjusts appropriately

Appendix C

Teacher Leader Effectiveness Perception Study Survey

What is your current position?

- Administrator
- Teacher leader
- Classroom teacher
- Special education teacher
- ESL teacher
- Other: please specify:

How many years of experience do you have including the present year?

- One
- Two – Five
- Six – Ten
- Eleven – Fifteen
- Sixteen – Twenty
- More than twenty

Which one of these best describes the highest level of education you have attained?

- Bachelor's degree
- Bachelor's degree plus coursework
- Master's degree
- Master's degree plus coursework
- Doctorate or Specialist's degree

Please identify someone you consider to be an effective teacher leader. Answer all questions with that person in mind.

Each question begins with:

In order to be an effective teacher leader, how significant is the ability to...

1. Apply strategies of adult learning?

	Not Significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very significant	Highly significant
Select only one option	<input type="radio"/>				

2. Advance the skills of colleagues by demonstrating expertise in observational skills and providing quality feedback in order to support reflective practice focused on improving instruction?

	Not Significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very significant	Highly significant
Select only one option	<input type="radio"/>				

3. Assist colleagues' abilities to improve the quality of collaboration and interaction with families?

	Not Significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very significant	Highly significant
Select only one option	<input type="radio"/>				

4. Initiate and facilitate colleagues' design and implementation of action research and analysis of data for decision making?

	Not Significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very significant	Highly significant
Select only one option	<input type="radio"/>				

5. Assist in developing and supporting collaborative teams and collegial interactions that improve the effectiveness of practice?

	Not Significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very significant	Highly significant
Select only one option	<input type="radio"/>				

6. Identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement and advocate effectively for them within and beyond the school?

	Not Significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very significant	Highly significant
Select only one option	<input type="radio"/>				

7. Inform and facilitate colleagues' selection or design, use and interpretation of multiple assessments along with other available data, to make informed decisions that improve the quality of instruction and student learning?

	Not Significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very significant	Highly significant
Select only one option	<input type="radio"/>				

8. Inform and facilitate the design and implementation of coherent, integrated and differentiated professional development based on assessed student and teacher needs?

	Not Significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very significant	Highly significant
Select only one option	<input type="radio"/>				

Conclusion

1. What additional information would you like to share about the characteristics/skills you have observed in effective teacher leaders?

Thank you for participating in this survey! Deanne Letourneau

Appendix D

Comments from Expert Panel Gathered from Google Doc

(Use the same number for each question)

Were you able to understand the intent of the questions in the survey?

1. Most of them
2. Yes
3. Yes
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. Yes
7. Most of them, some could be slightly reworded to help less experience teachers understand
8. yes

In your opinion, will the certified employees of District XYZ have any difficulty understanding the intent of the questions?

1. Maybe just a little
2. Maybe
3. Maybe just a little, depends on their experience
4. Depends on experiences
5. Maybe new to the profession
6. I don't think they will, except if they have little experience
7. Depends on experience and amount of interaction with teacher leaders.
8. Most certified employees of our district should recognize the language and understand the intent.

How long did the survey take you to complete?

1. 5 minutes
2. Less than 5 minutes
3. Less than 5 minutes
4. Less than 5 minutes
5. Less than 5 minutes
6. Less than 5 minutes
7. Less than 5 minutes
8. 5 minutes

Appendix E

IRB Approval from Baker University

April 17, 2012

Dear Ms. Letourneau:

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your research project application (E-0134-0402-0417-G) and approved this project under Expedited Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

The Baker University IRB requires that your consent form must include the date of approval and expiration date (one year from today). Please be aware of the following:

1. At designated intervals (usually annually) until the project is completed, a Project Status Report must be returned to the IRB.
2. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
3. Notify the OIR about any new investigators not named in original application.
4. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported to the IRB Chair or representative immediately.
5. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity. If you use a signed consent form, provide a copy of the consent form to subjects at the time of consent.
6. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.

Please inform Office of Institutional Research (OIR) or myself when this project is terminated. As noted above, you must also provide OIR with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If your project receives funding which requests an annual update approval, you must request this from the IRB one month prior to the annual update. Thanks for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Doolittle, EdD
Chair, Baker University IRB

Appendix F

Approval Letter from District to Conduct Research

May 3, 2012

Dear Ms. Letourneau,

Thank you for the opportunity to review your application to conduct research in the schools. Your materials are complete and in good order, and we are pleased to convey approval to begin your work. I must add that approval at district level does not imply any obligation for participation by particular schools or individual staff members.

We would like to be advised of your progress by a note to this office each semester you are engaged in work in our schools. At time of completion, we request that you file a written report of your findings with us. In the event that any component of your study changes, timely updates will be appreciated. Please let us know if we may facilitate your progress in any way. Best wishes for successful completion of your project.

Regards,

District Official, unnamed
Director, Research & Evaluation

Appendix G
Letter to Principals

Dear _____, (insert principal's name)

My name is Deanne Letourneau. I work in the district as a teacher leader and have worked for District XYZ since 1983. I am currently a doctoral student attending Baker University. I am asking for your assistance with my doctoral study. This is a perception study seeking to identify from the perspective of teachers, teacher administrators, and teacher leaders experienced in working with teacher leaders which performance skills outlined in the Kansas teacher leader standards most significantly contribute to the perceived effectiveness of individuals working as teacher leaders.

The district research department has granted permission to send this letter to all principals. You will receive an e-mail from me, with an electronic link to the survey within three days. I would appreciate your help and support in forwarding the link to your certified staff, and completing the survey yourself.

The survey is completely voluntary, and if you choose to participate, your consent to participate will be complete upon submission of the survey. All responses will be confidential; no attempt will be made to gather personal information to individually identify survey participants.

You can expect the survey to take approximately 10 minutes or less to complete. There is an option for additional comments that may take a few minutes longer if you wish to offer additional thinking.

Thank you for your assistance with my educational pursuit. When the study is completed, you will have full access to the results.

Deanne Letourneau

Appendix H

E-mail to principals

Dear _____:

As explained in the letter sent May 7, 2012, I am a teacher leader in the district working on a doctoral study. I would appreciate your help explaining to your certified staff the purpose behind my survey. I am seeking to identify the perceptions of teachers, teacher leaders and administrators regarding the performance skills most closely connected to perceived effective practice of teacher leaders. The design of the survey guarantees anonymity. The survey has 12 questions in all: three demographic questions, eight perception questions and one open ended optional response at the end.

The link for the survey is:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Y7T2XN6>

Thank you for your help.

Deanne Letourneau