

THE PERSPECTIVES OF CENTRAL OFFICE PERSONNEL: EXAMINING
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR VETERAN TEACHERS AS SPECIFIED IN THE
HIGHLY-QUALIFIED GUIDELINES OF THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001

by

JUDITH BLACK VINSON

(Under the Direction of Sally J. Zepeda)

ABSTRACT

The demands of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 call for classroom teachers to be highly qualified, and this legislation has brought teacher qualifications to the forefront of education. The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of central office administrators responsible for professional development. This qualitative case study sought to discover what central office administrators were doing to provide veteran teachers with ongoing professional development that meets the mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Interviews were conducted with two central office administrators for professional development to gain their perspectives. Symbolic interactionism was used to frame the study including data collection through semi-structured interviews. The constant comparative method was used to analyze transcripts, data, fieldnotes, and artifacts.

Two themes emerged related to the provision of ongoing professional development that meets the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and veteran teachers. The findings

revealed that the provision of professional development as mandated in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was driven by student achievement data related to the school improvement plan, and that relative to highly qualified, the provision of professional development for veteran teachers was related to certification requirements. Interestingly, the provision of professional development to veteran teachers was the same as the provision of professional development to all teachers.

INDEX WORDS: Highly Qualified, No Child Left Behind, Professional
Development, Veteran Teachers

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends who have been steadfast supporters of my endeavor and for whom I give thanks to the Lord every day. Their support, patience, understanding, and encouragement helped me to press on to the culmination of completing this work.

My husband and best friend, Charles Vinson

Our sons and daughters-in-law:

Ike Vinson

Alex and Kate Vinson

Ed and Stephanie Vinson,

and their daughter, our first grandchild,

Caroline Grace Vinson

My sister and friend

Beth Black

IN MEMORY

In loving memory of my parents, Howard and Nena Black:

I dedicate this work in thanksgiving for their love and the educational opportunities they provided that culminated with this accomplishment.

In loving memory of my sister, The Reverend Dr. Madge Black Floyd:

I dedicate this work in thanksgiving for her friendship, encouragement, and support throughout my life.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Public demand for accountability from school districts for the academic progress of the nation's children has kept school improvement at the center of educational reforms (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Harris, 2002a; Ingersoll, 2004; Southern Regional Education Board, 2004). The demands of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 call for classroom teachers to be highly qualified and this legislation has brought teacher qualifications to the forefront of education. School districts across America are striving to have highly qualified teachers in every classroom by the conclusion of the 2005-2006 school year. The No child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965. NCLB has brought a new urgency to the issue of accountability and school improvement. The law requires local school districts to assess the needs of the students and simultaneously to provide highly qualified teachers who have the skills and knowledge to provide effective instruction.

Research has linked student achievement and teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Harris, 2002a; Haycock, 1998; Kent, 2004; National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996; Randi & Zeichner, 2004). Research also confirms that the professional development of teachers plays an important role in maintaining teacher quality (Berry, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Fullan, 2001; Kent, 2004; Strahan, 2003). Professional development for practicing teachers is a necessity for the achievement of continuous improvement of teaching (Killion, 2002). How do we maintain a highly qualified teaching staff? How is professional development related to ensuring that highly qualified teachers are in every school?

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 specifies standards for highly qualified teachers and for professional development. According to the law, teachers are highly qualified if they can demonstrate content knowledge in a field through testing to meet state certification standards at the onset of entering the profession. NCLB focuses on four areas for recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. Those areas are teacher certification, recruitment, compensation for teachers, and professional development. The provisions for federal funding for professional development mandate the following (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001):

- All professional development must relate to the school improvement plan.
- The professional development activities must be research-based practices.
- Professional development must be tied back to student achievement.
- Professional development must also include activities related to the subject area of the individual teachers.
- Ongoing, long-term professional development activities that enhance classroom instruction must be provided.
- Evaluation of the professional development activities must be conducted.

It appears that NCLB is the first time in the millennia that professional development in federal legislation for schools mandated the link between professional development and highly qualified teachers, and, in addition, mandated that the professional development relate back to student achievement and school improvement.

In The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, federal policy reflected the findings of educational research and literature on effective professional development. Research showed that effective professional development was ongoing, long-term, and related to the teacher's content area (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). The federal policy included

these elements in the mandates for professional development. Printy & Marks (2004) described teacher learning as necessary for bringing about effective changes in classroom instruction. Because of the emphasis in NCLB on highly qualified teachers and on high quality professional development for all teachers, this study examined the perspectives of central office administrators responsible for providing professional development to veteran teachers as mandated in the federal policy. The implications of this federal policy were great as states and school districts initiated and implemented policies and procedures in compliance with NCLB.

NCLB requires all professional development to be focused on the school improvement plan. According to Harris (2002b), school improvement has been a driving force in education for “over the past thirty years” (p. 6), and state and federal education policies, initiatives, and programs have been influenced by the need for school improvement. School improvement is an evolving process that involves all stakeholders including teachers, school administrators, school support staff, students, parents, and community and business leaders. School improvement occurs at the local level (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Harris, 2002a; Strahan, 2003), and “Teacher development is major component of all successful school improvement programmes” (Harris, 2002a, p. 32).

The one-day workshops, especially those centered on non-academic activities that have been prevalent in staff development can no longer provide the professional development experiences that are required by NCLB (Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2004). School districts may need to change the ways they provide professional development to meet the daunting demands of NCLB. Darling-Hammond (2004, p. 1079) stated “schools and districts need to provide systematic supports for ongoing teacher learning.” New policies and procedures will need to be implemented to align professional development activities with school

improvement goals (Darling-Hammond, 2004; No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). Every public school is faced with elevating professional development for teachers to high quality standards and “in the end, the quality of education that will be available in our public schools will depend on the quality of professional learning opportunities available to teachers” (Randi & Zeichner, 2004, p. 221). States are implementing state certification standards for new teachers to meet the requirements of NCLB (Ingersoll, 2004; Keller, 2000). However, veteran teachers must also receive the ongoing professional development that will help them to be highly qualified teachers. What policies and procedures are being implemented to provide the ongoing professional development for teachers already in the schools to become highly qualified? This question serves as an organizing principle of the present research.

While states address the highly qualified teacher mandates of NCLB, how are school systems using professional development to reinforce and to improve the quality of instruction delivered by experienced teachers already in the classrooms? The purpose of this study was to discover the perspectives of district administrators responsible for professional development to gain insight about how they are providing professional development that meets specifically the needs of veteran teachers to become or to remain highly qualified in their areas of instruction.

Statement of the Problem

Many states have reformed teacher certification standards to comply with the NCLB demand for highly qualified teachers who can demonstrate their content knowledge (Poliatoff, 2002; Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2004). However, according to the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (2004), the requirements for the ongoing professional development of teachers have received little attention, and these requirements are not necessarily understood by school district officials. Research on effective school improvement and student achievement

has supported the idea that professional development policies do make a difference in the success of school improvement plans (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Fenwick, 2004; Garet et al., 2001; Goldring & Vye, 2004; Harris, 2002a). School districts have faced difficulties in retaining qualified teachers in their classrooms, and Ingersoll's (2002) research has underscored that the retention of qualified teachers continues as a problem.

One of the causes of attrition is a lack of support for teachers (Ingersoll, 2001, 2002). Although school districts have been providing professional development, the courses provided have not necessarily related to student or teacher needs (Darling-Hammond, 1997, 1999). Professional development credit toward recertification was given for short conferences and workshops, which were not necessarily related to instructional needs of teachers (Randi & Zeichner, 2004; Southeaster Center for Teaching Quality, 2004). However, ongoing, long term professional development which is related to instruction is mandated under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. What is being done to help veteran teachers to be highly qualified?

According to Chapman and Harris (2004), schools need to become "learning communities, engaged in continuous improvement efforts" (p. 223) and the duration of professional development activities for teachers as well as the content are important to improved student achievement. Darling-Hammond (2004) suggested that student achievement could be achieved in school systems that "provide professional learning opportunities for teachers that build their capacity to teach ways that are congruent with contemporary understandings about learning, use sophisticated assessments to inform teaching, and meet differing needs" (p. 1081). To ensure highly qualified teachers, schools need to address the types of professional development opportunities that are offered to veteran teachers (Randi & Zeichner, 2004; Southern Regional Education Board, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of central office administrators responsible for professional development. The research sought to discover what central office administrators were doing to provide veteran teachers with ongoing professional development that meets the mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Past research studies have considered the importance of professional development in school improvement and the effectiveness of various types of professional development (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Chapman & Harris, 2004; Linek, Fleener, Fazio, Raine, & Klalamp, 2003; Turchi, Johnson, Owens, & Montgomery, 2002). Recent research has focused on professional development and induction for new teachers (National Staff Development Council, 2005; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). Although Van Soelen (2003) studied the perspectives of veteran teachers on instructional supervision and professional development, the study did not include the perspectives of the district personnel responsible for providing supervision and professional development. Arnau (2001) studied the perspectives of veteran teachers who participated in a voluntary peer coaching program as coaches, but the perspectives of the staff developers was not studied. Arnau's study was completed before NCLB and neither Arnau (2001) nor Van Soelen (2003) researched the mandate of providing professional development to veteran teachers. Although Van Soelen's research was conducted during the time in which NCLB was taking root, she did not focus on accountability. At the time in which this research was being conducted, no research on the perspectives of district level administrators responsible for providing ongoing professional development for veteran teachers to become highly qualified in their content areas and in their methods of instruction could be found. NCLB mandates that

professional development must be related to the subject area of the teacher and as a way to enhance classroom instruction.

In a study on the principal's role in providing teacher development, Arbogast (2005) found that leadership was important to supporting professional development, but the perspectives of district leaders were not studied. In case studies conducted through the Southeastern Center for Teaching Quality, findings indicated that the "skill level, resourcefulness, and knowledgeability of the district administrative staff appears to affect the quantity and quality of teacher learning opportunities" (Turchi et al., 2002, p. 12). For teachers who have been teaching for several years, what does it mean that all teachers must be highly qualified? What does it mean for these teachers that professional development must be ongoing and must relate to school improvement? What are the district administrators doing to help these veteran teachers meet the standards of NCLB? This study examined the perspectives of district administrators on what has been implemented to assure that veteran teachers are highly qualified. The study examined the perspectives of district level administrators related to the procedures and policies adopted as well as the implementation of the policies in the local schools to assure ongoing professional development for veteran teachers as required by NCLB.

Background of the Study

For almost half a century, federal legislation has supported educational programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Although the federal government had been involved in public education since the federal education legislation began in 1787, the government increased its involvement with the enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2004). In 1983 during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, *A Nation at Risk*, published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, reported that

the educational achievement of students in American schools was declining and lagging behind that of other nations (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). *A Nation at Risk* triggered concern that teachers were not well prepared or qualified to prepare students for improved academic achievement (National Staff Development Council, 2005; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). States began implementing changes to address the academic deficiencies, and each state established its own academic standards. Legislative policies at both the federal and state levels have forced changes such as mandatory student testing for promotion, mandatory teacher testing in their fields, and sanctions for schools not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (Chudowski & Chudowski, 2005).

Sparks and Hirsch (2000) report on behalf of the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) results from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) that “teachers who attended professional development activities focused on standards were much more likely to teach using reform activities that raise students' achievement” (p. 3). Strahan (2003) stated that teacher quality was a key element in student achievement, and that the quality of teaching has been shown to be the major factor in predicting student academic outcomes. Schools that have overcome barriers to student achievement have done so by increasing teacher quality (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1999).

In the 1990s, districts were reporting shortages of qualified teachers in the following areas: special education, English as a second language, elementary education, science, math, and technology. The problem of supply and demand of qualified teachers for America’s schools was billed as a grand teacher shortage by the U. S. Department of Education in the 1990s (Bradley, 1999). The U. S. Department of Education estimated that schools would need to hire two million teachers in the first decade of the 2000s. However, this teacher shortage was not uniform across

the nation and not even within some school districts. Some school districts had no shortage of qualified teachers in their classrooms while others could not find enough qualified teachers to fill their needs (Ingersoll, 2003).

States began to look at their shortages and to evaluate their needs. States have responded to these shortages by passing new regulations and implementing programs that allowed teacher certification through non-traditional means (Richardson & Roosevelt, 2004). States have recruited using incentives to draw new teachers not only from the colleges but also from the workforce (Wilson, Bell, Galosy, & Shouse, 2004). Career switches have been encouraged with the implementation of alternative education certification programs (Richardson & Roosevelt, 2004). Bonuses have been given to new qualified teachers as incentives to accept teaching jobs in many states. As states attempted to solve the shortage of qualified teachers, Ingersoll (2004) pointed out that the teacher shortage was caused more by teacher attrition than a lack of qualified candidates. High levels of turnover were indications of employment problems (Ingersoll, 2003; Wilson et al., 2004). One of the reasons that new teachers gave for leaving the profession was a lack of support from administrators (Ingersoll, 2003).

Ingersoll (2003, 2004) found that there were problems related to staff development and support. These problems could be addressed through policies in state and local boards of education. According to Ingersoll (2003, 2004), the problem of the teacher shortage might be in keeping qualified teachers after they were hired. Some states implemented mandatory mentoring programs for beginning teachers to address the retention problem (Keller, 2000).

The link between student achievement and teacher performance and evaluation began to emerge as an effort to increase accountability (Berry, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2004). Growing concern that the quality of the teaching staff needed to be improved caused many states to begin

testing teachers to ensure that they were knowledgeable about the content area in which they would teach (Poliatoff, 2002; Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2004). Some states began to provide incentives for teachers and schools for improved performance related to student achievement (Berry, 2004). States also legislated penalties for schools such as dismissing all staff and a state takeover of the schools that did not measure up to improving academic achievement. In Georgia, schools that are identified for school improvement and fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years and then continue to fail after a year of corrective action are subject to alternate governance. Alternate governance may include replacing the school staff (Georgia Department of Education, 2004).

One solution to the perennial issue of the teacher shortage is to fill vacancies with teachers who are certified in another area. This practice is referred to as out-of-field teaching. Ingersoll (2004) made the case that out-of-field teaching compromises teacher quality because many teachers who teach out-of-field do not have the content area courses sufficient to be knowledgeable about the subject. Many out-of-field teachers do not have the equivalent of a college minor in the field they are teaching; they have minimal coursework. In the past, many states allowed teachers to teach out of their fields as long as most of their day was spent teaching the subject in which they were certified (Ingersoll, 2004). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 mandates that school systems must have 100% highly qualified teachers in all subjects by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. Under this act, out-of-field teachers would not be highly qualified. Highly qualified teachers as defined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 are teachers who hold at minimum a bachelor's degree, state certification in the field they are teaching, and demonstrate mastery of every subject they teach.

The state of Georgia issued new certification rules and regulations on what constitutes a highly qualified teacher (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2004). To be highly qualified in Georgia, teachers must hold a clear and renewable certificate and teach in-field. Teachers must complete an approved program of study, including student teaching, and they must pass the PRAXIS II content area test for their field (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2004). Teachers with experience and already teaching but not certified are thus not considered highly qualified, but these teachers have been given several options to become certified in the areas in which they teach. These options include passing the content test or providing documentation that they have college coursework and sufficient experience to be qualified to teach in the area that had been considered out-of-field (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2004).

Teacher quality has been linked to student achievement, and professional development has been linked to maintaining and improving teacher quality (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Providing ongoing, continuous learning for teachers will improve the quality of education in a school (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1998; Potter, Reynolds, & Chapman, 2002; Sparks & Hirsh, 2000). Professional development should provide for different learning styles, include hands-on activities, and allow for individual teacher goals and self-directed activities (Glickman et al., 1998). Administrators and supervisors must encourage teachers to be lifelong learners so that they can continually improve instruction in their classrooms (Zepeda, 2003). The former notion of professional development (or staff development) as isolated one-time workshops must give way to the idea of teachers as lifelong learners. Professional growth must meet the needs of the individual teacher as well as the needs of the students (Fenwick, 2004). Levin (2003) conducted longitudinal case studies on how

teachers develop over time in their careers. Levin found that there are many factors that influence the development of teachers over time and that the complexity of each teacher's life affects the development. Teacher quality does affect student outcomes and opportunities to participate in ongoing professional development increase improved teacher pedagogy (Levin, 2003; Printy & Marks, 2004). The National Staff Development Council (2005) promotes professional development that is sustained over time, content driven, and helps teachers to build on their skills through job-embedded opportunities.

Research Questions

School districts must realign their professional development policies and programs to provide ongoing professional development activities that relate to school improvement goals (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). The state of Georgia has implemented new Professional Learning guidelines that are aligned with the mandates of NCLB (Georgia Department of Education, 1997-2005). The present research will explore what two local school districts in Georgia are doing to develop and to implement professional development for veteran teachers within their districts. The following research questions were explored in this study:

1. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on the process of developing and implementing the policies and procedures adopted by their school districts to provide ongoing professional learning activities that provide support for veteran teachers to be highly qualified?
2. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on providing veteran teachers with professional development activities which are aligned with the school district's comprehensive improvement plan?
3. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on implementing changes for veteran teachers in professional development activities as a result of The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?

Conceptual Framework

According to Blumer (1969), “symbolic interactionism takes the position that people respond to things based on the meaning that something has for them and that meanings come through interpretation” (pp. 2, 5). Symbolic interactionism takes the position that humans change their actions according to what is happening around them. In the present study, the researcher sought to understand the perspectives of central office administrators to provide veteran teachers with ongoing professional development. What are their perspectives of this process? Blumer (1969) also stated:

the point of view of symbolic interactionism is that large-scale organization has to be seen, studied, and explained in terms of the process of interpretation engaged in by the acting participants as they handle the situations at their respective position of the organization (p. 58)

This study examined the perspectives of district administrators on the provision of professional development to veteran teachers.

The symbolic interactionism lens supports that research should be conducted through “direct examination” (Blumer, 1969, p. 47). The perspectives of central office administrators responsible for professional development is best studied from this viewpoint. Symbolic interactionism provides the concept for the researcher to discover and dig out information “by a direct, careful, and probing examination” (Blumer, 1969, p. 48). The perspectives of district administrators on the changes that have been made and what they have done to adjust to the changes are best studied through the context of the system administrators and through the lens of symbolic interactionism.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it examines the perspectives of professional development administrators at the district level on providing ongoing professional development to veteran teachers. If Darling-Hammond's (1997) premise is correct in that the quality of instruction impacts student achievement then it behooves the research community to understand the perspectives of those responsible for providing professional development for veteran teachers. The understanding of the perspectives of central office personnel and their work to provide professional development for veteran teachers also points to the research that has affirmed that professional development can provide learning opportunities for teachers that improves the quality of instruction in the classroom (Sparks & Hirsch, 2000). Prior to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, many state and local school districts provided staff development that was not sustained, research based, or applicable to academic content areas (Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2004).

According to the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (SECTQ), little attention has been given to the mandate for ongoing professional development as part of the highly qualified requirements of NCLB. In response to the NCLB Act 2001, the state of Georgia adopted the standards for staff development from the NSDC (Georgia Department of Education, 2004). The state implemented new professional learning guidelines requiring local school systems to provide ongoing professional development that relates to the school's comprehensive school improvement plan (Georgia Department of Education, 2004). To date, there has not been research to examine how local school systems are implementing the new guidelines focusing on veteran teachers. There has been research on professional development for new teachers including induction and mentoring programs (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Smith &

Ingersoll, 2004). There has also been research on recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ingersoll, 2001). However, there is little information on specifically what school districts are doing through professional development for their veteran teachers. This study is significant because it provides data about what policies and procedures have been implemented by local school systems to implement ongoing professional development for veteran teachers. This research considered the perspectives of central office professional development administrators about the effectiveness of these procedures in increasing the quality of teaching in the classrooms of veteran teachers.

Assumptions of the Study

The assumption was made that the participants were knowledgeable about the state professional development guidelines and the mandates of the NCLB Act of 2001 related to professional development. It was also assumed that the district professional development coordinators were knowledgeable about adult learning and effective practices in providing meaningful professional development for veteran teachers.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined based on the purpose of this study:

Comprehensive School Improvement Plan – a school system’s plan for school improvement that is considered in all education programs, decisions, and funding sources.

Highly Qualified Teacher – a teacher who can demonstrate competency in the instructional content area.

Professional Development – a form of teacher development that uses research-based practices to provide opportunity for improving teaching skills and knowledge.

Veteran Teacher – a teacher who is state certified and has been teaching five or more years.

Central Office Administrators for Professional Development – an administrator at the district level who is responsible for overseeing professional development for the entire school district.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to two large school systems in the Middle Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) District. As this study was concerned with central office administrators responsible for providing professional development, the scope of the research was limited to interviews with the district Professional Development Administrators.

Overview of the Research Procedures

An open-ended case study was chosen to allow the researcher to formulate a description of the perspectives of professional development administrators on professional development for veteran teachers in their districts.

1. The researcher interviewed two district administrators for professional development.
2. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed, and the researcher kept a journal to detail field notes and to chronicle ongoing analysis of the data.
3. The researcher requested copies of the written policies and procedures that were being used to implement professional learning plans in both school systems. The researcher obtained not only the board policies but also any written plans used to help with the implementation of professional development.

4. The researcher requested copies of the policies, procedures, and plans that had been used just prior to the implementation of new policies related to professional development.

The written documents provided an opportunity to compare the past and present policies and procedures. The interviews provided in-depth information on how the implementation of those board policies was being carried out at the individual schools and about the administrators' perspectives on the effectiveness of the professional development for veteran teachers.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 describes the purpose and significance of the study, a statement of the problem as well as the background for the study and research methods used. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature relevant to accountability and school improvement, highly qualified teachers, professional development, and veteran teachers. Chapter 3 describes in detail the research design and methodology of the study. Chapter 4 reports the context of the study and the participant profiles. Chapter 5 reports the findings for the Delmas School District. Chapter 6 reports the findings for the Mahan School District. Chapter 7 includes a summary and discussion. Chapter 7 also considers the implications of the study for further research and for practitioners, policy makers, and those who prepare administrators for central office administration.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

“Great school leaders create nurturing school environments in which accomplished teaching can flourish and grow” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 13). The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of central office administrators responsible for professional development. The research sought to discover what central office administrators were doing to provide veteran teachers with ongoing professional development that meets the mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The overall research questions that directed this study included the following:

1. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on the process of developing and implementing the policies and procedures adopted by their school districts to provide ongoing professional learning activities that provide support for veteran teachers to be highly qualified?
2. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on providing veteran teachers with professional development activities which are aligned with the school district’s comprehensive improvement plan?
3. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on implementing changes for veteran teachers in professional development activities as a result of The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?

Overall, this chapter reviews the literature relevant to professional development, veteran teachers, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The review begins with an examination of accountability and school improvement including state and federal policies germane to understanding the complexities of professional learning and development. The second section is a review of literature covering teacher quality and the requirement for highly qualified teachers

as outlined in NCLB. Next, the literature on professional development is reviewed. The final section reviews the literature on veteran teachers.

Accountability and School Improvement

Successful school improvement efforts have moved from relying only on an emphasis on accountability for student test results to including “investments in teacher learning and knowledge and skill, organization of schools to support teacher and student learning, and systems of assessment that drive curriculum reform and teaching improvements” (Darling-Hammond, 2004, p. 1060). “Over the past thirty years the school improvement research field has become a powerful influence in both educational policy and practice” (Harris, 2002b, p. 6). School improvement as an effective process for educational reform is most successful when the following elements are present in the school reform efforts:

- (a) teacher development;
- (b) school-level leadership that drives change and shared leadership;
- (c) reform efforts that take into account the needs of the individual school;
- (d) school reform that relates to individual student achievement and;
- (e) school culture that encourages collaboration, collegiality, and focuses on teaching and learning. (Harris, 2002b, pp. 11-12)

Accountability and school improvement are issues that are major driving forces in education today (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Harris, 2002a). In 1983, the National Commission on Education published the report, *A Nation at Risk*. The document reported that student achievement in American schools was declining, and that America was lagging behind other nations. The public demand for schools to be accountable for student achievement was at the center of education reform. In response to the report of declining academic achievement,

standards-based reform began to rise (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Changes in course requirements for students, testing of students, and curriculum were implemented.

In *Doing What Matters Most*, Darling-Hammond (1997) reported that although there was a substantial increase in the number of students taking core academic courses, student achievement had not risen accordingly. For instance, reports from the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) revealed that Georgia's 4th grade math achievement scores leveled out with little or no change from 1992 to 1996. Georgia's reading achievement scores dropped from 1992 to 1994 (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Harris (2002b) linked student achievement and school improvement. Chapman and Harris (2004) reported that school improvement plans that were tailored to fit the needs and environment of individual schools were more effective.

The federal government's involvement in the accountability issue of education through legislation and programs has continued over at least 40 years. Information from the National Conference of State Legislatures (2004) in Table 2.1 provides a timeline of key legislation as well as proposals and reports that led up to the 2001 legislation, No Child Left Behind Act.

Table 2.1: *The Federal Government and Education Accountability*

Year	Title	Importance to Accountability
1965	Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965	Improvement of education opportunities for underprivileged children
1982	A Nation at Risk	Report on the state of education in America and the need for improvement
1989	National Education Summit established "America 2000"	Created 6 objectives to support the standards movement in education
1989	National Education Goals Panel	Created to monitor and report on progress of America 2000
1994	Goals 2000: Educate America Act	Created National Education Standards and an Improvement Council
1994	Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994	Reaffirmation of federal role and support of standards and assessments
2002	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001	Increased federal funding and increased accountability mandates

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 revisited the issue of accountability and school improvement. The law increased the pressure on schools to be accountable for improving the academic achievement of students. The responsibility of states and local school districts to be accountable for student achievement and to implement school improvement plans is made clear in NCLB. The law requires local school districts to assess the needs of the students and to provide teachers who have the skills and knowledge to meet those needs by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. Title II of the NCLB is entitled “Preparing, Training and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals,” and the Title II sections specify the requirements of this part of the NCLB law. Title II, Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, contains legislation that specifically addresses the responsibility of school districts to be accountable for school improvement and student achievement. The legislation further requires school districts to increase the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom. Section 2101 of Title II, Part A, states the purpose of Title II, Part A and reads as follows:

The purpose of this part is to provide grants to State educational agencies, local educational agencies, State agencies for higher education, and eligible partnerships in order to —

- (1) increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools; and
- (2) hold local educational agencies and schools accountable for improvements in student academic achievement. (Section 2101)

Title II, Part A, Subpart 4, Section 2141, entitled Accountability, addresses the process for improvement for schools which have not met adequate yearly progress. In Subpart 4, Section 2141(d), Special Rules, Title II, Part A calls for state and local governments to use the federal funding for schools in need of improvement as follows:

to enable teachers at the schools to choose, with continuing consultation with the principal involved, professional development activities that —

- (1) meet the requirements for professional development activities described in section 9101; and
- (2) are coordinated with other reform efforts at the schools. [Section 2141(d)]

While Part A of Title II addresses training and recruitment of teachers and principals, other parts of Title II also focus on accountability in specific areas for funding. Title II, Part B calls for training of teachers specifically in mathematics and science. Title II, Part C provides guidelines for transitions to teaching through the Troops-To-Teachers Program, and provides funding for training of teachers for the National Writing Project, civic education, and the teaching of traditional American History. In addition, Part C gives support to teachers and school professionals by giving them “the tools they need to undertake reasonable actions to maintain order, discipline, and an appropriate educational environment” (Title II, Part C, Subpart 5). The final part of Title II, Part D, provides legislation for improving education through the use of technology. Funding for professional development for teachers and administrators in technology is provided in this part.

According to Darling-Hammond (1997), the link between teacher quality and student achievement has emerged as a major factor in school improvement. In 2001, NCLB linked teacher quality to improving student academic achievement and required that professional development to be directly related to the school improvement plan. The law required local school districts to assess the needs of the students and simultaneously to provide highly qualified teachers who had high quality skills and knowledge in the academic fields they were teaching.

Potter, Reynolds, and Chapman (2002) reviewed literature on effective school improvement in schools that were facing “socially and economically challenging circumstances (p, 252). They described three phases of school improvement since the late 1970s. The first phase focused on organizational changes. These changes did not clearly define a link to student

academic achievement (Potter et al., 2002). In the second phase in the 1990s, the emphasis on school effectiveness and school improvement were more closely related (Potter et al.). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Potter et al. (2002) found that the emphasis on school improvement included a focus on student outcomes, teacher quality, professional development, researched based academic programs, and changes in school culture that support school improvement. “Teacher training, coaching, and development” were elements of effective school improvement (pp. 244-245).

The focus on accountability for school improvement has brought forth changes in professional development and changes in classroom instruction (Turchi, Johnson, Owens, & Montgomery, 2002). Turchi et al. presented preliminary findings on data from a qualitative research study conducted in six southern states. The research was a case study conducted across 24 schools in 6 states in which 150 teachers were interviewed and surveyed. Interviews and teacher surveys were used. They found that as accountability led to increased student assessments for achievement in school districts that had a higher number of low performing students, teacher professional development was more closely controlled by local school district administrators. Overall, the Turchi et al. study concluded that the way in which states designed and managed their accountability systems had an effect on teachers’ responses to reform efforts. This in turn impacted student achievement either positively or negatively (Turchi et al.).

Strahan (2003) reported the results of several case studies of struggling schools that were seeing successful results from school improvement efforts. The schools had included in their reform efforts improving student achievement through engaging students in learning, improving teacher quality, and promoting learning communities (Strahan). In one study, successful school reform was accomplished through a professional development model that provided staff

development classes for teachers and provided follow up coaching after teachers returned to the classrooms to apply what they had learned. The quality of teaching improved as did student achievement. Other successful school reform efforts included professional development activities that brought teachers together in grade levels or across subject areas. According to Strahan, the results of these studies showed that “race, socioeconomic level, and class size are poor predictors of student academic growth and that the major determinant of academic growth is the quality of the teacher” (p. 298).

While schools increase efforts to improve, the research and literature have pointed to teacher quality as a major component of school improvement. Accountability not only for student achievement but also for teacher quality are issues that schools are addressing in their school improvement plans. Teacher quality is an element that must be discussed in relation to accountability, school improvement, student achievement, and NCLB.

Teacher Quality

The link between teacher quality and student achievement has been firmly established in the educational literature on improving student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Darling-Hammond & Ball, 1999; Harris, 2002a, 2002b; Kent, 2004; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996; Randi & Zeichner, 2004). “No other intervention can make the difference that a knowledgeable, skillful teacher can make in the learning process” (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 8). According to Darling-Hammond (1997), past efforts to improve student achievement through curriculum changes and course requirements did not produce substantial improvement in student achievement. Teacher quality was the missing link to improved student achievement. The mandates of NCLB as it relates to teacher quality mirror the recommendations reported by Darling-Hammond (1997) and reported by Haycock (1998) for the Education Trust.

In *Doing What Matters Most*, Darling-Hammond (1997) outlined the recommendations of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. The recommendations were:

Standards for teachers linked to standards for students

Reinvent teacher preparation and professional development

Overhaul teacher recruitment and put qualified teachers in every classroom

Encourage and reward knowledge and skill

Create schools that are organized for student and teacher success. (pp. 3-4)

Darling-Hammond (1999) noted that the knowledge of teachers and their instructional ability affects student outcomes. In 1998, the Education Trust in its publication, *Thinking K-16*, presented data from a study of Tennessee schools that grouped teachers by effectiveness based on the teacher's effectiveness in improving student academic achievement (Haycock, 1998). The most effective teachers had a record of student gains on test scores of about 39% above that of the least effective teachers. The 1998 Education Trust publication called for having qualified teachers in all classrooms through:

- (a) making changes in certification standards to assure teacher content knowledge,
- (b) improving higher education programs,
- (c) providing professional development for teachers already in the classrooms,
- (d) ensuring that poor and minority children have teachers that are at least as qualified as the ones that teach other students,
- (e) having policies for informing parents of teacher qualifications, and
- (f) having policies to recruit the best qualified teachers. (Haycock, 1998, pp. 11-13)

Teacher education that increases a teacher's subject knowledge and instructional methodology results in higher student test scores (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Smith, Desimone, &

Ueno, 2005). In *Teaching for High Standards*, Darling-Hammond (1999) called for a “reinvention of professional development” (p. 14). The quality of teaching can be improved through professional development if the professional development centers on content knowledge and instructional methodology (Darling-Hammond, 1999).

Smith et al. (2005) conducted a study of the relationship of teacher credentials, content knowledge, professional development, and teaching strategies in math. The quantitative study used data from a teacher survey that was given in conjunction with the National Assessment of Educational Progress Mathematics Assessment in 2000. Smith et al. used the 8th grade sample and measured data from 1,226 teachers of 8th grade mathematics in 558 schools. The study measured the teaching strategies that provided more conceptual learning opportunities, such as reasoning, and less procedural learning strategies, such as memorization. Smith et al. further measured teaching strategies that provided opportunities for students to apply and to understand what they were learning in relationship to the real world. In their analysis, the researchers employed a two-level and a three-level hierarchical linear model. The study presented four major findings. The first finding was that the certification of a teacher as provisional as opposed to non-provisional was not a defining element of effectiveness. Second, the study concluded that teachers who had a major or minor in the field might be well prepared to teach the subject at varying levels. The third finding was that new teachers used more procedural strategies and fewer conceptual strategies. Fourth, the study’s finding was that teachers who had participated in professional development related to their content field did improve their teaching strategies (Smith et al.).

Frome, Lasater, and Cooney (2005) reported the findings of a study conducted by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) on the characteristics of well-qualified teachers and those

characteristics that are related to improvement of student achievement. The study used data from the Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB) middle grades schools assessment in the Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) network from 2002 and 2003. The quantitative study drew data from 1210 middle grades teachers in 67 schools. The characteristics that had a positive impact on student learning were "teacher motivation and expectations, instructional practices, mentoring and induction experiences, and content and pedagogy training" (p. 1). Frome et al. (2005) concluded that neither teacher content knowledge nor teacher pedagogical ability individually can be effective to increase the quality of instruction and positively impact student achievement. Both teacher knowledge and teacher instructional practices must be considered when examining teacher quality (Frome et al.). Based on the study's findings, Frome et al. stated that school districts should increase the use of professional development activities that "focus on effective instructional practices and emphasize that teachers' use of these strategies positively impact student achievement" (p. 7).

NCLB and Highly Qualified Teachers

Although literature and research have found that teacher quality has a direct effect on student achievement, the literature and research has revealed a gap in the definition of "highly qualified" as mandated in NCLB and the definition of quality instruction in the classroom (Smith et al., 2005; Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2004; Southern Regional Education Board, 2004). Do teacher credentials of state certification and passing test scores in the content field as required in NCLB mean that the teacher is a quality, effective teacher?

The No child Left Behind Act of 2001 mandated that every teacher in every classroom in America be highly qualified by 2006. The NCLB Act requires that to be highly qualified teachers must have a bachelor's degree, be certified in the field in which they are teaching, and

pass a content-area test in that field. Recent research by Smith et al. (2005) considered the relationship between teachers considered highly qualified under the NCLB definition and the use of effective teaching strategies. The research confirmed that content knowledge is basic to teacher quality. However, Smith et al. (2005) and Frome et al. (2005) found that content knowledge alone was not enough for effective teaching and that effective instructional strategies must be considered when determining the quality of a teacher. According to Azordegan & Coble (2004) reporting for the Education Commission of the States, most states have implemented policies to require testing for new teachers in their content area but most states have not implemented processes for gathering data on highly qualified teachers related to ongoing professional development.

Shortage of Qualified Teachers

According to a report prepared for The Education Commission of the States by Azordegan et al. (2004), staffing “hard-to-staff” schools with highly qualified teachers continued to be a problem for states because of high teacher turnover rates. The Southeastern Center for Teaching Quality reported in 2004 that although NCLB required highly qualified teachers, states were not meeting the demand to increase teacher quality. The shortage of qualified teachers has been a problem for school districts (Ingersoll, 2002), and Ingersoll reported that the shortage was more a problem of teacher retention than a lack of availability of quality teachers. According to Ingersoll (2002, 2003) and Darling-Hammond (2003), qualified teachers are not staying in the classroom. Attrition is a problem. One of the solutions to attrition is support through professional development of teachers after they have entered the classroom. Support in the form of mentoring has proven to be an effective tool for keeping new teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

NCLB calls for highly qualified teachers in every classroom and requires that teachers have certification in their teaching fields and that they have passed content area tests for their teaching fields. However, NCLB does not stop there. The law requires that schools improve teacher quality through professional development that is ongoing and sustained. The following section discusses what the literature and research reveal about effective professional development.

Professional Development

NCLB calls for ongoing professional development that relates both to the school improvement plan and to the teacher's content knowledge and instructional methods. Kent (2004) stated that teacher quality could be improved through professional development. However, professional development that was not related to specific content goals, that was not research-based, and that was not "intellectual" enough was found to be ineffective professional development (Kent, p. 3). Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000) reported results of surveys and analysis of literature on effective professional development. Birman et al. conducted a survey of approximately 1,000 teachers on professional development they received as part of the Eisenhower Professional Development Program, which was funded through Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1999. In addition, they conducted case studies in five states. Through this study, Birman et al. concluded that there are six elements of professional development that mark it as effective. The elements of effective professional development included:

Form: Form refers to approaching professional development using adult learning methods

Duration: Activities of longer duration included more content and opportunities for learning and were thought to be more effective.

Collective Participation: Activities which include teachers from the same school and/or grade who teach the same content and grade levels were more effective.

Content: Activities centered on subject areas and that increased the teacher's knowledge of a subject were more effective.

Active Learning: Activities that included classroom observation, implementation in the classroom and classroom evaluations of the participant facilitated teacher learning.

Coherence: Professional development activities were more effective when the activity was a part of a larger plan of professional development and not just a random activity.

(Birman et al., 2000, p. 29)

Further research in 2001 by Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon reported the results from a national study on professional development. "Results of our study indicate that if we are serious about using professional development as a mechanism to improve teaching, we need to invest in activities that have the characteristics that research shows foster improvements in teaching" (Garet et al., p. 937). This study collected data from a 1997 Teacher Activity Survey used in the Eisenhower Professional Development Program involving math and science teachers nationwide. Garet et al. used responses from 1,027 teachers in 358 school systems and/or state agencies for higher education. This quantitative study sought to correlate data on various types of professional development with outcomes for both students and teachers. The study examined three "structural features," form, duration, and group participation. The study also examined three "core features," content focus, active learning, and coherence in teachers' professional development (Garet et al.).

According to Garet et al. (2001), the form or type of professional development activity most often used was the workshop. They further stated that the workshop-type activity has been

criticized often as not being an effective way to support teacher development related to their classroom instruction. The workshops were often held away from the schools and had limited schedules. The alternative forms of professional development that were ongoing and involved group or peer participation at the school site were found to be more effective forms of improving teacher instruction (Garet et al., 2001).

The results of the study indicated that the longer duration of a professional development activity in terms of time span and number of contact hours impacted the effectiveness of the activity in terms of teacher learning (Garet et al., 2001). Teachers had more time to be actively engaged in learning and thus to connect the activities to their classroom instruction. The study also found that the more the activity emphasized content the more effective the activity was. Teachers were more effective when the activity was connected to what they teach (Garet et al.). In summary, the results of the Garet et al. study found that “sustained and intensive professional development is more likely to have an impact, as reported by teachers, than is shorter professional development” (p. 935).

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) in 2001 developed twelve Standards for Staff Development divided into three areas. Table 2.2 displays the NSDC’s twelve Standards.

Table 2.2: *NSDC’s Twelve Standards for Staff Development*

THREE AREAS OF STANDARDS	TWELVE STANDARDS
CONTEXT STANDARDS:	<p>Staff development that improves the learning of all students:</p> <p>Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district. (<i>Learning Communities</i>)</p> <p>Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement. (<i>Leadership</i>)</p>

Table 2.2 *continued*

	Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration. (<i>Resources</i>)
PROCESS STANDARDS:	Staff development that improves the learning of all students:
	Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement. (<i>Data-Driven</i>)
	Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact. (<i>Evaluation</i>)
	Prepares educators to apply research to decision making. (<i>Research-Based</i>)
	Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal. (<i>Design</i>)
	Applies knowledge about human learning and change. (<i>Learning</i>)
	Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate. (<i>Collaboration</i>)
CONTENT STANDARDS:	Staff development that improves the learning of all students:
	Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement. (<i>Equity</i>)
	Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately. (<i>Quality Teaching</i>)
	Provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately. (<i>Family Involvement</i>)

In *We Must Model How We Teach*, Goldring and Vye (2004) proposed models of professional development for school leaders to provide meaningful professional development for their staff. The research conducted in 2003 in Tennessee followed school principals, assistant principals, and central office staff who participated in a leadership training program. The

program, *Institute of School Leadership* (ISL), was funded through the state of Tennessee and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The program focused on “teaching and learning that is learner-centered, community-centered, assessment-centered, and knowledge-centered” (p. 194). This research examined how well the ISL leadership program presented the effective teaching and learning modalities as described in *How People Learn*, a National Research Council report by Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (1999). Data were collected from 394 participants from 14 different workshops in 2003 (Goldring & Vye, 2004). The data included a self-reported inventory from each participant, a pre-test and post-test program evaluation, and written responses from participants to questions presented throughout the training. The study concluded that the ISL professional development program did positively impact school leaders by improving their “knowledge and understanding of information related to effective school leadership” (p. 203). According to Goldring and Vye, the ISL professional development for school leaders was important because the leaders learned how to provide and to support professional development for the teaching staffs of their schools. Although the Goldring and Vye study considered the perspectives of administrators on the professional development they received, it did not consider the perspectives of these administrators as it related to providing the professional development to their staff nor did the study examine the perspectives of central office administrators.

The NCLB requirements for professional development that is ongoing and content oriented as well as oriented toward teaching techniques is supported by the literature and research on effective professional development. In a position paper, Youngs (2001) wrote that “Despite a growing consensus among educators and policy makers regarding the centrality of professional development in efforts to reform schools, most professional development efforts fail

to take account of new ideas about school capacity” (p. 279). According to Youngs, part of the definition of school capacity is “including the knowledge, skills and dispositions of individual teachers” (p. 279). Youngs states that professional development can provide improvement and strengthen a school’s capacity by enhancing the knowledge, skills and dispositions of teachers (p. 279). Youngs posits that “professional development and other improvement efforts are most likely to improve student achievement when they comprehensively address all aspects of school capacity” (p. 280).

Youngs (2001) reviewed professional development and school improvement plans in several states across the nation. The conclusions about professional development were that:

1. professional development activities should promote collaboration among teachers from same school
2. teachers should be involved in establishing shared goals
3. high-stakes assessment systems cause a narrowing of focus of professional development and thus weaken professional community and capacity.
4. professional development must achieve a balance between promoting coherence within and providing autonomy to individual schools. (pp. 296- 298)

A recent report from The National Center for Education Statistics presented data from a 1999-2000 survey of teachers, principals, and district administrators on professional development (Choy, Chen, & Bugarin, 2006). The study acknowledged the efforts to reform professional development and one of the purposes of the survey was to determine what had changed in the provision of professional development. The results of the survey indicated that principals thought teachers were involved in collaboration and goal setting to a greater degree than the teachers thought they were involved (Choy et al., 2006).

Federal Legislation Governing Professional Development

Darling-Hammond and Ball (1999) presented professional development strategies that would provide quality learning opportunities for teachers. The federal requirements for

professional development incorporate the same ideas. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 specifies the requirements for states to receive Federal funding. The act gives an extensive list of activities that should be a part of the teacher professional development. Title II, Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 contains legislation that pertains to professional development for teachers and principals.

Under Title II, A Section 2112, entitled “State Applications,” the specifications for receiving federal funding are listed. In Section 2112, subparts (5) to (8) refer to states providing Professional Development. In Table 2.3, Title II, A, Section 2112, (5) to (8) specifies that states provide the following:

Table 2.3: *Federal Funding Specifications for States Providing Professional Development: The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Title II, A, Section 2112*

SUBPARTS	PROVISIONS
Section 2112:	
(5)(A)	A description of how the State educational agency will coordinate professional development activities authorized under this part with professional development activities provided under other Federal, State, and local programs.
(5)(B)	A description of the comprehensive strategy that the State educational agency will use, as part of such coordination effort, to ensure that teachers are trained in the use of technology so that technology and applications of technology are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in all curricula and academic subjects, as appropriate.
(6)	A description of how the State educational agency will encourage the development of proven, innovative strategies to deliver intensive professional development programs that are both cost-effective and easily accessible, such as strategies that involve delivery through the use of technology, peer networks, and distance learning.
SUBPARTS	PROVISIONS
Section 2112:	
(7)(A)	A description of how the State educational agency will ensure compliance with the requirements for professional development activities described in section 9101 and how the activities to be carried out under the grant will be developed collaboratively and based on the input of teachers, principals, parents, administrators, paraprofessionals, and other school personnel.

Table 2.3 *continued*

(7)(B)	In the case of a State in which the State educational agency is not the entity responsible for teacher professional standards, certification, and licensing, an assurance that the State activities carried out under this subpart are carried out in conjunction with the entity responsible for such standards, certification, and licensing under State law.
(8)	A description of how the State educational agency will ensure that the professional development (including teacher mentoring) needs of teachers will be met using funds under this subpart and subpart 2.

Title II, A, Section 2123, (3) and (5) addresses the local use of funds for professional development activities for teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals. The activities listed are also given later in Title IX, Definitions, and require that professional development activities impact classroom instruction and improve the knowledge and practices of the staff to have a positive impact on student achievement. Table 2.4 lists the professional development activities that Local school systems must provide under Section 2123:

Table 2.4: *Federal Specifications for Professional Development Activities: The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Title II, A, Section 2123 (3) and (5)*

SUBPARTS	PROVISIONS
Section 2123:	
(3)	Providing professional development activities—
(3)(A)	that improve the knowledge of teachers and principals and, in appropriate cases, paraprofessionals, concerning—
(i)	one or more of the core academic subjects that the teachers teach; and
SUBPARTS	PROVISIONS
(ii)	effective instructional strategies, methods, and skills, and use of challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards, and State assessments, to improve teaching practices and academic achievement;
(3)(B)	that improve the knowledge of teachers and principals and, in appropriate cases, paraprofessionals, concerning effective instructional practices and that—
(i)	involve collaborative groups of teachers and administrators;

Table 2.4 *continued*

(ii)	provide training in how to teach and address the needs of students with different learning styles, particularly students with disabilities, students with special learning needs (including students who are gifted and talented), and students with limited English proficiency;
(iii)	provide training in methods of—
(iii)(I)	improving student behavior in the classroom; and
(iii)(II)	identifying early and appropriate interventions to help students described in clause (ii) learn;
(iv)	provide training to enable teachers and principals to involve parents in their child's education, especially parents of limited English proficient and immigrant children; and
(v)	provide training on how to understand and use data and assessments to improve classroom practice and student learning.
(5)	Carrying out programs and activities that are designed to improve the quality of the teacher force, such as—
(5)(A)	innovative professional development programs (which may be provided through partnerships including institutions of higher education), including programs that train teachers and principals to integrate technology into curricula and instruction to improve teaching, learning, and technology literacy, are consistent with the requirements of section 9101, and are coordinated with activities carried out under part D;
(5)(B)	development and use of proven, cost-effective strategies for the implementation of professional development activities, such as through the use of technology and distance learning;
(5)(C)	tenure reform;
(5)(D)	merit pay programs; and
(5)(E)	testing of elementary and secondary teachers in academic subjects teachers teach.

The professional development activities that are cited throughout NCLB have in common the use of programs and activities that are aligned with the definition of professional development given in Title IX of the act. Title IX, Section 9101(34) of NCLB provides the

definition of what qualifies as “high-quality” professional development. It is interesting to note that the federal guidelines for professional development have been adopted verbatim by Georgia in The Georgia Implementation Guidelines: The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Title II, Part A (2005). To wit, the federal guidelines in Table 2.5 are also the guidelines used by Georgia.

Table 2.5: *Federal Guidelines for Definitions of Professional Development: The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Title IX, 9101(34)*

SUBPARTS	PROVISIONS
Section 9101 (34)	
(A)(i)	improve and increase teachers’ knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified
(ii)	are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans;
(iii)	give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards;
(iv)	improve classroom management skills
(v)(I)	are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher’s performance in the classroom; and
(v)(II)	are not 1-day or short-term workshops or conferences;
(vi)	support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification;
(vii)	advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are—
(vii)(I)	based on scientifically based research (except that this subclause shall not apply to activities carried out under part D of title II); and
SUBPARTS	PROVISIONS
(vii)(II)	strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; and
(viii)	are aligned with and directly related to—
(viii)(I)	State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments; and
(viii)(II)	the curricula and programs tied to the standards described in subclause (I) except that this subclause shall not apply to activities described in clauses (ii) and (iii) of section 2123(3)(B);
(ix)	are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools to be served under this Act;

Table 2.5 *continued*

(x)	are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;
(xi)	to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and core academic subjects in which the teachers teach;
(xii)	as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;
(xiii)	provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs;
(xiv)	include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice; and
(xv)	include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents; and
(B)	may include activities that—
(i)	involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish schoolbased teacher training programs that provide prospective teachers and beginning teachers with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers and college faculty;
(ii)	create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified teachers; and
SUBPARTS	PROVISIONS
(iii)	provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in subparagraph (A) or another clause of this subparagraph that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom.

In addition to the above activities, the NCLB Act in Title IX, Section 9101, states that professional development may include activities that include the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish school-based teacher training programs or that provide programs for the education of paraprofessionals to become certified teachers.

Professional development may further provide follow-up training to teachers who have

participated in professional development activities that ensure that the skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom.

State Legislation and NCLB

The state of Georgia Department of Education has implemented policies and procedures to provide compliance with the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. The following statements guide the Georgia Department of Education's professional development program.

The primary purpose of professional learning is to improve learning of a diverse student population.

Professional learning is fundamental to school improvement.

Professional learning facilitates effective change and innovation in a mutually supportive environment.

Professional learning is a shared process that promotes growth in individuals and organizations.

Professional learning responds to the diverse needs of all personnel.

Professional learning is an integral component of school and school system programs.

Planning and decisions in professional learning programs must include those who receive the training.

Effective professional learning must be based on theory, research and sound practice.

Effective professional learning is responsive to the life-long needs of adult learners.

(Georgia Department of Education, 1997-2005)

The Official Code of the Georgia State Board of Education includes rules governing professional development in Georgia's public schools. Specifically, 160-3-3-.04 is titled "Professional Learning." This rule was adopted November 18, 2003 and was effective December 8, 2004. Under 160-3-3-.04, (1) definitions are included for competencies, comprehensive school plans, needs, professional learning, professional learning advisory committee, program coordinator, program evaluation, stipends, and a plan for professional learning. Under rule sections 160-3-3-.04, (2), the Plan for Professional Learning is specified. Table 2.6 displays excerpts from the Georgia rule, Plan for Professional Learning.

Table 2.6: *Excerpts from the Georgia rule, Plan for Professional Learning*

(2) PLAN FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	
(a) Statement of Policy.	<p>The local board of education shall adopt a policy that requires the preparation and implementation of a system-level CSIP. This plan shall include comprehensive professional learning as a major component. Professional learning funds shall be used for activities that enhance the skills and knowledge of all school system personnel, school board members and school council members, which directly relate to improving student achievement. In addition, the policy shall require the appointment of a professional learning coordinator and the appointment of a professional learning advisory committee.</p>
(b) Local Professional Learning Planning.	<p>Each school system shall develop three-year professional learning plans that will be included in the school system's CSIP. Such professional learning plans shall organize and direct all professional learning activities for the system regardless of the source of program or funding. The Department shall approve these three-year plans and conduct formative assessment of their progress. Assurances pertaining to these plans as specified by the Department shall be signed by the local superintendent and included as part of the annual consolidated application to the Department. This plan, and related budgets, shall be reviewed and updated annually by the local school system. The plans shall provide for the following.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy and procedures for assuring that each school within the school system has a CSIP that addresses comprehensive professional learning as a major component and is aligned with the system CSIP. The school CSIP shall include at least the following: 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Procedures to assure that all certified staff and paraprofessionals have the opportunity to participate in the identification of individual and/or collective professional learning activities for their school. (ii) Procedures to assure that all individual and collective professional learning activities are aligned with the school CSIP.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Administrative procedures that provide for reporting all professional learning activities for all personnel in one comprehensive plan and for implementation of the comprehensive plan as approved. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Professional learning programs that address the assessed needs of all students, and school and system personnel as identified through analysis of student data, the evaluation of the effectiveness of instructional programs, and other means deemed appropriate by the school system. For professional personnel and paraprofessionals, the annual personnel evaluation process shall also be used to identify professional learning needs.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Professional learning activities according to priorities that are determined annually by the local board of education. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Professional learning program descriptions that include statements of need, objectives, activities, evaluations and budget information (see Rule 160-3-3-.10 Professional Learning Unit (PLU) Program Approval).

Table 2.6 *continued*

6. Procedures of the Professional Learning Advisory Committee appointed by the local board of education or superintendent and as defined/described in paragraph (1)(f) of this rule.
7. Procedures for conducting formative and summative program evaluation.
8. A comprehensive budget that indicates all possible local, state and federal fund sources to support the plan.
9. An annual report to the local board of education from the local school system superintendent describing the progress in meeting the goals and objectives of the comprehensive Professional Learning Plan. [Rule 160-3-3-.04, (2)]

Rule 160-3-3-.10 provides guidelines for programs that provide Professional learning Units (PLUs) to educators. The rules specify that the programs must provide plans and procedures in how the professional learning program will meet the needs of the teachers and provide activities that enhance student learning and achievement.

Fiscal Issues of Professional Development

“A new instructional vision must go hand-in-hand with new strategies for staff development” (Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 34). Darling-Hammond urged that districts work with schools to bring about school improvement through a “conscious process of changing resource allocations, practices, and regulations at each level” (p. 35). According to Darling-Hammond, schools must make provisions to allow professional development for teachers in the school day. Darling-Hammond (1999) stated:

Professional development needs to be seen as integral to the act of teaching. An added role for staff developers should be to root out the old saw that time not spent directly with students has no bearing on higher student achievement. As one review of more than 60 studies found, added dollars spent on increasing teacher education had a larger impact on increased student achievement than money spent on reduced class size, increased teacher experience, or increased salaries. (p. 35)

The NCLB act of 2001 targets teacher quality through allocating funds for professional development. Under the guidelines, 10 percent of Title I funds must be used for high quality

professional development. In addition, Title IIA funds are no longer just for class size reduction.

Title IIA funds may be used by local school districts for the following:

- recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers and administrators,
- professional development activities,
- improvement of the quality of the teacher workforce,
- leadership development,
- alternative teacher preparation programs and
- teacher advancement initiatives. (Title II, Part A)

Title IIA section of NCLB requires that all teachers in core academic areas be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. Local school districts that spend Title IIA funds for professional development must ensure that the activities comply with the guidelines in Title IX, Section 9101(34) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Title IIA funds may be used for paying for the 10 hours of staff development units or 6 semester hours that are required for certification renewal every 5 years, provided that state or local funds would not be used in the absence of the Title IIA.

In addition, Title IIA funds may be used to purchase instructional materials and supplies. The materials and supplies must be for teachers' use (not students') for activities needed to carry out instructional programs for academic improvement. The funds in this program may also be used for professional development training for teachers and principals to more effectively communicate with parents to help increase parental involvement in their child's education. The activities may provide an understanding of how to help parents with skills and specific strategies they need for helping with their children's schoolwork. Funds may also be used for increased communication between the school and parents about their child's education and progress. Title

IIA funds may be used to pay for advanced degrees for school principals or teachers if the degree will improve effectiveness. The cost of teacher tests for certification purposes that determine a teacher's knowledge level in a specific academic field may be paid for out of Title IIA funds. Under Section 2123(a)(8) of Title IIA, the law provides that local school districts may use the funds for "teacher advancement initiatives that promote professional growth and emphasis on multiple career paths such as paths to becoming a career teacher, mentor teach, or exemplary teacher." Title I funds may also be used to support professional development for paraprofessionals.

Decisions about professional development costs are very crucial in the present climate of accountability in education. Under the NCLB guidelines, the piecemeal approach to professional development will not be funded. According to Hornbeck (2003), many school districts have planned their professional development activities around the funding available through various federal and state programs. The result has been professional development activities that are not organized into a plan that supports school improvement but rather workshops that address one element. NCLB mandates that professional development be clearly connected to school improvement, ongoing, research based, and provide for instructional improvement, and increased content knowledge. School districts must assess the instructional needs of each school and in some cases each teacher and then craft their professional development activities around these plans (Hornbeck). How does a school district know which activities will be the most cost efficient and at the same time be the most effective?

Shaha, Lewis, O'Donnell, and Brown (2004) stated that school districts should consider both teacher and student impacts in evaluating professional development programs. In *Evaluating Professional Development: An Approach to Verifying Program Impact on Teachers*

and Students, Shaha et al. presented a model for evaluation of professional development programs. Results from a case study to evaluate a professional development program in reading were presented. In this quantitative study, data were collected from 34 teachers from grades kindergarten through high school in a small school district. Of those teachers selected, 25 participated in the professional development for reading and 9 did not participate. According to Shaha et al. (2004), learning should be measured. Costs must also be considered. In addition, teacher and student attitudes should be considered. Before determining cost effectiveness, a school district must first know what funds will be used and for what specific types of services, materials, etc. (Shaha et al.). A plan that allows the district to identify cost elements and then assign available funds to those elements should be an approach that addresses the problem of providing effective professional development.

According to Odden, Archibald, Fermanich, and Gallagher (2002), previous research on the costs of providing professional development has revealed that most school districts do not have a clear understanding of all the cost elements that are a part of professional development expenses. The lack of understanding resulted from using outdated accounting codes that did not provide accurate data about the budgeted costs. There was no consistent form for organizing the costs of professional development; therefore, a comparison of costs was difficult (Odden et al.). Data collected from the school district did not give a clear picture of the true costs because it did not always take into account professional activities at the individual schools. Odden et al. developed a framework for analyzing costs that has summarized the cost elements that most districts incorporate into their plans. The framework provides a consistent scheme of organization that can give a school district an understanding of its costs and a tool for projecting

costs. The Odden et al. (2002) framework uses the following six cost elements: teacher time, training and coaching, administrators, travel and transportation, tuition, and conference fees.

Funding for the mandates of NCLB has been an issue that states have faced. Some states have opted not to comply with NCLB (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005).

Although new money has been allocated by the federal government for implementation of the NCLB mandates, some believe that without stricter enforcement and clarification of teacher quality, the money will not be used for teacher quality as intended in NCLB (Haycock, 2005).

There are many professional development activities and programs available to school districts but research has supported that certain activities are effective in increasing teacher effectiveness and affecting student achievement. School wide initiatives that address a student achievement deficiency such as math or reading can be productive. Programs that target individual teachers are also productive. For instance, one on one mentoring from veteran teachers can be helpful to new teachers or struggling veteran teachers (Zepeda, 2003). New teacher induction programs that last for two or three years and give support to teachers in both academic content areas as well as practice are helpful (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Research also supports peer coaching (Arnau, Kahrs, & Kruskamp, 2004).

Research also supports collaborative groups. In schools that have the entire staff collaborate for school improvement, the success rate is higher (Printy & Marks, 2004). Long term professional development plans are more effective. Teachers can study and then practice and then study to hone their skills. Research supports professional development that is embedded in the teacher's work and occurs during the regular workday at the school. This is in contrast to the model of workshops away from the school site. Further, collaboration of the teachers at the school site allow for the teachers to problem solve among themselves. (Randi & Zeichner, 2004).

Peer coaching is an effective adult learning tool for teachers (Arnau et al., 2004) Teacher study groups also help to build teacher capacity (Randi & Zeichner, 2004).

The literature and research have demonstrated the importance of professional development in supporting teacher quality. However, teachers may be at various stages of their teaching careers as professional development is presented to them. For the purposes of this research, teachers who have experience teaching for five or more years are considered to be veteran teachers. The next section discusses the literature and research surrounding veteran teachers.

Veteran Teachers

Adult Learning

Randi and Zeichner (2004) reported that “a new theory of teacher professional learning has begun to emerge, one that pays as much attention to the design of staff development as to its content” (p. 210). Adult learning occurs best when the learning experience is connected to the actual practice of the profession and when the learner has ownership in the planning and choosing of the learning (Randi & Zeichner; Zepeda, 2003). According to Randi and Zeichner a focus on professional learning that is designed with the needs of the adult learner is emerging, and Zepeda recognized that adult learners are motivated by their needs as professionals.

Brookfield (1986) identified six “principles of effective practice” (p. 9). These six principles are applicable to facilitating teachers as adult learners in professional development:

1. Voluntary Participation
2. Mutual Respect
3. Collaborative Spirit
4. Action and Reflection

5. Critical Reflection

6. Self-Direction. (pp. 9 – 20)

Brookfield (1986) further stated that adults participating in learning activities have the following features in common:

- (a) legal status of adulthood;
- (b) participation in learning about a particular subject or in learning skills with a base of common experience;
- (c) group participation; and
- (d) participants each have different experiences, skills, and knowledge upon which the group can build new ideas, skills, and knowledge. (p. 2)

Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (1999), editors of the book, *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School*, discussed what research has discovered about adult learning as it relates to teachers. The book was sponsored by the Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning, the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, and the National Research Council. One chapter was devoted to the topic of teacher learning. One of the focuses of this chapter was on practicing teachers and how they learn. Bransford et al. put forth the following five methods through which teachers learn:

Teachers learn from their own practice.

Teachers learn through their interactions with other teachers.

Teachers learn from teacher educators in their schools, in degree programs, and in enhancement projects that are often provided by consultants.

Many teachers learn through enrollment and study in graduate programs.

Teachers also learn about teaching in ways that are separate from their professional work, such as community activities with youth and parental roles. (pp. 179-180)

The quality of learning opportunities for teachers affects the ultimate benefit of professional development activities (Bransford et al., 1999). Bransford et al. stated that teacher learning is more effective when professional development activities are learning-centered, knowledge-centered, assessment-centered, and community-centered. “Typical approaches to formal teacher professional development are antithetical to what research findings indicate as promoting effective learning. “Typical workshops tend to occur once, deal with deconceptualized information, and often do not resonate with teachers’ perceived needs” (Bransford et al., p. 192). Moreover, Bransford et al. indicate, “research evidence indicates that the most successful teacher professional development activities are those that are extended over time and encourage the development of teachers’ learning communities” (p. 192).

Veteran Teachers

One theme that is repeated in studies about teachers’ perspectives is that the perspectives of veteran teachers are different than the perspectives of novice teachers. In *Life Cycle of the Career Teacher* (Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000) six phases of growth of teachers are identified. As teachers move beyond the “novice” and “apprentice” phases into the “professional” phase they become less focused on their own needs and are more focused on student needs. Professional teachers focus more on the learning styles of the individual students and less on their on instructional competencies (Steffy et al.). The implementation of teacher professional growth plans was studied by Fenwick (2004) in a qualitative study of three schools in a district in which the growth plans were being implemented. Interviews were conducted with the principals and with 11 teachers. In addition, interviews were conducted with 5 district

administrators from other school districts that were preparing to implement the growth plans. The study recorded the perspectives of selected experienced teachers on the benefits of the professional growth plans. Fenwick (2004) reported that the viewpoints of novice teachers and veteran teachers differed in that “career and life stages influenced their goals and general commitment to professional development” (Fenwick, p. 277).

Research and popular literature have included the veteran teacher in a variety of studies. The perspectives of veteran teachers relative to participation in peer coaching and mentoring have been studied. In a qualitative study, Arnau (2001) studied the perspectives of veteran teachers who volunteered to participate in a peer coaching program. According to Arnau, “to facilitate school improvement and renewal and to satisfy the needs of veteran teacher, peer coaching as a form of mentoring can help to revitalize veteran teacher while improving teaching and learning” (p. 3). In Arnau’s study, 18 veteran teachers with 20 or more years of experience were interviewed, and she found that veteran teachers were willing to spend their own time in activities that would provide opportunity for professional growth for them. Arnau suggested that further research needed to be conducted, however, to gain further perspectives about the needs of veteran teachers. Although the present study will not include veteran teachers in the study, the professional development offered to veteran teachers will be examined from the perspectives of central office administrators who are responsible to ensure they are highly qualified.

Van Soelen (2003) also conducted a qualitative study on the perspectives of 7 veteran teachers relative to instructional supervision. The study considered the various types of instructional supervision and the veteran teachers’ perspectives on how the instructional supervision benefited them. The veteran teachers in the study had 15 or more years of teaching experience. The findings of the study were that:

Veteran teachers desire authentic assessment of their teaching through frequent communication and observation.

Veteran teachers use a series of self-monitoring and self-initiated strategies as tools for their instructional supervision.

Veteran teachers value opportunities for feedback from other people regarding their practice.

Veteran teachers found the actions of the larger school system to impede their professional growth.

Career markers stand no test of time in the developmental needs of teachers. (p. 191)

Van Soelen (2003) concluded that administrators need to be aware of the learning styles of adult learners and the career stages of adult learners. Further, administrators need to improve their communication with the veteran teachers (Van Soelen). Although Van Soelen's study considered the perspectives of the veteran teachers, the perspectives of the central office administrators responsible for instructional supervision and professional development were not studied.

According to Brundage (1996), "traditionally, the purpose of supervision has been to improve teachers' instructional practices and, ultimately, to increase student learning" (p. 90). Brundage recorded the perspectives of veteran teachers with 15 or more years of teaching experience on instructional supervision. The study found that the traditional supervision received by these veteran teachers was considered to be not very effective for teachers with years of experience. It was suggested that research into models of supervision that included activities such as peer coaching, group activities, and continuous feedback would be beneficial to the professional development of veteran teachers. Steffy et al. (2000) stated that administrators need to be educated about adult learning and to be supportive of experienced teachers relative to providing in professional development activities. Again, the perspectives of the central administrators on providing the supervision were not considered in Brundage's study.

In 1998, Singh and Billingsley reported the results of a quantitative study on how teachers' commitment is affected by professional support and peer support. The 9,040

participants were divided into two categories, new teachers and experienced teachers. All were full-time public school teachers. The experienced teachers had an average of 12 years teaching experience. The study found that veteran teachers had slightly less commitment than novice teachers and suggested that further study be conducted on veteran teachers (Singh & Billingsley, 1998).

Carney (2003) studied experienced teachers in relation to “school-based teacher training” (p. 413). The case study method was employed and interviews were conducted with 8 “subject-based ‘expert’ teachers and some 16 associated class teachers” from one school (p. 416). The school had 13 student teachers during the year of the study. The study not only considered the benefits of the contributions of veteran teachers to the program but the study also considered how the veteran teachers benefited from helping in the teacher training activities. One of the findings was that professional development for experienced teachers was complicated by the teachers’ desire for autonomy. Resistance to new ways of training teachers rendered the professional development benefits for experienced teachers less effective (Carney).

A qualitative study conducted by Landt (2004) sought to discover whether veteran teachers experienced professional growth from serving as the cooperating teacher for student teachers. Landt interviewed “in-depth” 18 teachers at the middle and high school levels (p. 76). The teachers interviewed were all veteran teachers teaching experience ranging from 5 to 35 years. Interviews with the veteran teachers were conducted at the beginning of the school semester and again toward the middle or end of the semester. The results revealed that veteran teachers made changes to their own teaching practices as a result of working with the student teachers. The experience caused the veteran teachers to reflect on their teaching practices.

Observation, collaboration, and “teaching about teaching” were identified as the elements of the experience that provided professional growth for the veteran teachers (Landt, 2004.)

Alvy (2005) suggested ways that school districts could support and retain veteran teachers. According to Alvy, veteran teachers contribute wisdom and “hard-won” experience to the teaching community, and veteran teachers should not be neglected. School administrative personnel should collaborate with veteran teachers and professional development activities should be designed provides benefits for the veteran teachers as well as the novice teachers (Alvy).

Chapter Summary

For over three decades, the issue of student academic achievement has influenced education policy and programs. Changes in curriculum and increased testing of students were implemented to address the declining academic achievement of America’s students reported in the 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*. Academic course requirements for students were also changed. The increasing emphasis on accountability for the academic achievement of America’s children led government and educators to continue to seek solutions.

Research documented that the link between student achievement and teacher quality was significant. Effective school improvement efforts included programs for professional development to improve teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Harris. 2002a). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 brought renewed urgency to the need for America’s schools to provide a quality education for every child. NCLB mandated the link between teacher quality and school improvement. Title II, Part A called for improvement of student achievement through improvement of teacher and principal quality. The emphasis on teacher quality became more focused.

The research and literature on teacher quality presented a strong case that the quality of the teacher made a significant difference in student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1997). The literature identified the instructional ability of the teacher and the content knowledge of the teacher as key components of teacher quality. Recommendations were made calling for changes in teacher certification requirements, improvement of teacher preparation programs, and improvements in professional development programs. NCLB required that every teacher be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. Although NCLB required that to be highly qualified a teacher must have a bachelor's degree, be certified, and pass a content area test, research reported that teacher instructional practices as well as teacher knowledge affected student achievement.

Whereas highly qualified is a complex issue, its complexities are exacerbated by teacher attrition. The shortage of qualified teachers was a problem for school districts. One of the problems identified in the literature was the insufficient support of teachers. Professional development for teachers was suggested as a way to provide support (Ingersoll, 2002, 2003). NCLB mandated that professional development be provided to increase teacher quality.

For school districts, the provision of professional development became more complex under NCLB. Teacher professional development as mandated by NCLB must be driven by the school improvement plan and must be related to content and instructional methods. Professional development must be ongoing. The research and literature identified key elements of effective professional development that included strategies used in adult learning, activities that grouped teachers with other teachers of the same subject, and activities that focused on the teacher's content area. In addition, planned professional development activities that were ongoing and included active learning, such as classroom implementation, were more effective. The National

Staff Development Council (2005) developed staff development standards that reflected the key elements described in research. The NSDC proposed context standards, process standards, and content standards.

The NCLB mandate for highly qualified teachers and for professional development that improves teacher quality brought with it a responsibility at the local school district level to implement policies and procedures. Under Title II, part A, NCLB mandated that teacher professional development include training in technology, peer networks, and that the training meets the needs of teachers. Title IX of NCLB provided clear definitions of professional development. In summary, these activities should relate to the school improvement plan, improve teacher knowledge, instructional skills, and classroom management skills. In addition the activities should provide training in improving instruction through data and assessments.

States across the nation implemented policies for providing professional development. The state of Georgia implemented state policies consistent with NCLB. The state further required that each local school district develop a plan for professional development that is related to the school improvement plan. Although some funding for professional development was provided through the Title II, Part A of NCLB, research revealed that many school districts did not understand the full costs of providing professional development. A model for planning and analyzing the costs of professional development was developed by Odden et al. (2002).

Effective professional development activities included mentoring, collaborative groups, peer coaching, and teacher study groups (Printy & Marks, 2004). Recognition that the needs of teachers vary with experience and across life stages means that school districts will be structuring professional development to the needs of teachers so that the quality of classroom instruction can indeed become better. Facilitation of adult learning identified in the literature

included six principles: voluntary participation, mutual respect, collaborative spirit, action and reflection, critical reflection, and self-direction (Brookfield, 1986).

Veteran teachers have been studied from the perspectives of the teachers in a variety of areas. According to the literature, veteran teachers have moved beyond the novice and apprentice stages of teaching and have moved into the professional phase (Steffy et al., 2000). The research showed that veteran teachers involved in peer coaching found opportunities to grow professionally. The experience of peer coaching satisfied the needs veteran teachers and they also improved their own teaching.

The research showed that veteran teachers believed that they benefited more from instructional supervision that included opportunities for feedback, self-monitoring, self-initiated activities, and assessments that included frequent communication and observations. Veteran teachers also benefited more from group activities, collaboration, and training other teachers through mentoring or peer coaching. The research showed that administrators needed to be more cognizant of adult learning styles and the needs of veteran teachers.

The research and literature showed that teacher quality matters in the classroom and that professional development which improves the quality of teaching was needed (Birman et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Garet et al., 2001). Professional development has been the focus of much research and literature. However, the research primarily has been from the teachers' perspectives. To date, there is little or no literature and research on the perspectives of the central office administrators responsible for providing professional development as required in NCLB. Although, several studies have reported findings about administrative procedures and actions, the perspectives of district administrators themselves in relation to providing high quality professional development to veteran teachers have not been studied. Therefore, a study

that considers the perspectives of central office administrators responsible for providing ongoing professional development to veteran teachers is important as it fills a gap in the literature and research.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of central office administrators responsible for professional development. The researcher sought to discover what central office administrators were doing to provide veteran teachers with ongoing professional development that meets the mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The perspectives of central office administrators are significant because the viewpoints come from who provide oversight for the professional development needs of teachers and who at the same time must comply with law such as the mandates of NCLB

Research Questions

1. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on the policies and procedures implemented by their school districts to providing ongoing professional learning activities that provide support for veteran teachers and staff to be highly qualified?
2. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on the effectiveness of these policies, procedures and research-based activities in supporting the school district's comprehensive school improvement plan?
3. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on implementing changes for veteran teachers in professional development activities as a result of The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?

A case study approach was used to gain the perspectives of two central office administrators. Two interviews were conducted with two ($N=2$) administrators responsible for professional development in two large school systems in middle Georgia. In the first interview, the researcher asked questions to elicit the perspective of the administrators on providing ongoing professional development to veteran teachers in their system. The researcher also

collected initial data and artifacts. In the second interview, the researcher probed with questions arising out of the analysis of the first interview and artifacts collected. In the second interview, participants were asked to review transcripts for accuracy. The researcher also collected any artifacts not previously obtained.

Research Design and Rationale

Because the purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of central office administrators responsible for professional development and to discover what they were doing to provide veteran teachers with ongoing professional development, a qualitative design was chosen. The qualitative data collection method allows the collection of first hand data with rich description. The qualitative study “opens up a world to the reader through rich, detailed, and concrete descriptions of people and places ... in such a way that we can understand the phenomenon studied and draw our own interpretations about meaning and significance” (Patton, p. 438).

Over the last 30 years, the use of qualitative research in education has become more prevalent (Creswell, 2002). In the 1970s, educational researchers sought an alternative to traditional research. The use of qualitative research on the part of educational researchers would allow the researcher to rely more on the viewpoints of the participants and less on the researchers’ viewpoint of education. This alternative to traditional quantitative methods approached educational research from the perspective “that educational research should consider the participant’s view, describe it within a setting or context (e.g., a classroom), and explore the meaning people personally hold for educational issues” (Creswell, 2002, p. 49). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated:

What is salient to us is that, first, no manipulation on the part of the inquirer is implied, and second, the inquirer imposes no a priori units of the outcome. Naturalistic

investigation is what the naturalistic investigator does, and these two tenets are the prime directives. (p. 8)

“Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). This method allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of the perspectives of administrators related to professional development of veteran teachers to ensure teacher quality. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative research is conducted through an “intense and/or prolonged contact with a ‘field’ or with life situations, reflective of everyday life of individuals, groups, societies and organizations” (p. 6). Since this study considered the perspectives of administrators on providing professional development, the qualitative design was best suited for reflection on this everyday life situation. “A main task is to explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situations” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 7).

In this study, the researcher sought to discover the viewpoints of educators providing professional development for veteran teachers. The rationale for using qualitative research in this study was that it offered an opportunity for the researcher to explore the ways in which school district administrators “understood, accounted for, took action, and otherwise managed their day-to-day situation” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 7) as it related to providing professional development to veteran teachers as mandated in the provisions of NCLB.

Theoretical Framework

Symbolic interactionism provided the methodology for “moving from ignorance or an uninformed position to greater and more accurate awareness of what is taking place” (Blumer, 1969, p. 39). Blumer (1969) stated that scientific inquiry involved two methods of inquiry, exploration and inspection. According to Blumer:

Exploration is by definition a flexible procedure in which the scholar shifts from one to another line of inquiry, adopts new points of observation as his study progresses, moves in new directions previously unthought of, and changes his recognition of what are relevant data as he acquires more information and better understanding. (p. 40)

Through exploration the researcher should formulate as accurate a picture as possible of the phenomena being studied (Blumer, 1969). Inspection involves analysis of the data in different ways in order to consider all viewpoints. Blumer likens inspection to picking up a strange physical object:

we may pick it up, look at it closely, turn it over as we view it, look at it from this or that angle, raise questions as to what it might be, go back and handle it again in the light of our questions, try it out, and test it in one way or another. (p. 44)

Symbolic interactionism allows the researcher to examine phenomena very carefully and to come to an understanding of the participants' perceptions of their world (Patton, 2002). Since the purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of central office administrators responsible for professional development, symbolic interactionism provided the theoretical framework for the study.

Case Study

A case study design was chosen to explore the perspectives of central office administrators responsible for professional development. According to Merriam (1998):

Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. It offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand the readers' experiences. These insights can be construed as tentative hypothesis that help structure future research; hence, case study plays an important role in advancing a field's knowledge base. (p. 41)

A case study may be used to provide insight into an issue. Through the case study, the researcher conducts an "in-depth exploration" of the phenomena of interest (Creswell, 2002).

Yin (1984) characterized the case study as being unique because of "its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence — documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations" (p. 20). Yin (1984)

described the case study as “empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (p. 23). Five basic components which are important for the case study research design were presented by Yin (1984):

a study’s questions;
its propositions, if any;
its unit(s) of analysis;
the logic linking the data to the propositions; and
the criteria for interpreting the findings. (p. 29)

Merriam (1998) stated that the strength of using case studies in educational research was that it allowed the examination of “educational processes, problems, and programs” in such a way as to “bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice” (p. 41).

Since the purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of central office administrators responsible for professional development, a case study approach was used. The purpose of the case study design is “to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest” (Patton, 2002, p. 447). To gather in-depth information, interviews were conducted with each participant. Artifacts were collected to give further understanding and documentation.

Data Collection and Management Techniques

The study examined the perspectives of two ($N=2$) central office administrators responsible for professional development for their school districts. The participants of the study were willing to participate in the study. Letters explaining the study and requesting permission to use their school district in the study were sent to the superintendents of the two selected school districts. Both superintendents agreed to the participation of their school districts. After

permission was granted, letters and consent forms were sent to the administrators responsible for professional development in each school district.

Interviews

Since the purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of central office administrators responsible for professional development, interviews were a major form of data collection used. “One of the most important sources of case study information is the interview” (Yin, 1994, p. 82). Interviewing allows the researcher to understand the perspectives of the participants. Open-ended questions provided opportunity for participants to express their perspectives without being restricted by closed questions. This unrestricted opportunity for the participants to express their perspectives added to the depth of insight for the researcher (Creswell, 2002).

In this study, the researcher conducted two interviews with each of the two administrators during the late spring of 2006. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. The researcher communicated through phone calls and email with each participant prior to the first interview so that the interviews could be arranged at a time and place convenient for the participants. The first interviews were held in early May and the second interviews were held approximately three weeks after the first interviews. All interviews were held at the participants’ offices during the regular work week and during regular office hours. At the beginning of the first interview, the researcher explained the study and obtained signed consent forms from the participants. Both participants said that they understood the purpose of the study and both agreed to participate.

The first set of questions was designed to obtain biographical information about each of the participants. A sampling of the biographical questions is listed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: *Biographical Questions Used in the First Interviews*

1. Tell me about your formal education, what degrees you have earned, and in what areas you are certified.
2. How long have you been working in the field of education?
3. What administrative positions have you held and how long were you in each position?
4. How did you come to be in the present position? What led up to your being in this position?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your background in education?

During this part of interview, the researcher became familiar with the educational and professional background of the participants. The researcher also learned how each participant came to be in the job position as the central office administrator for professional development for their respective districts.

The first interview questions asked were regarding the perspectives of the participants in providing professional development to veteran teachers as mandated by NCLB. The researcher developed questions aligned to each of the overall research questions. The questions were designed to allow the researcher to understand the perspectives of the participants. Table 3.2 provides a sampling of the interview questions asked aligned to the researcher questions.

Table 3.2: *Questions Asked in the First Interview and Aligned with the Research Questions*

Interview Questions Aligned with Research Question # 1	Interview Questions Aligned with Research Question # 2	Interview Questions Aligned with Research Question # 3
What does NCLB mean to you relative to highly qualified? What does it mean to your teachers and to your school district?	Which policies and/or procedures have been most effective in supporting the professional development needs of veteran teachers?	Tell me about the process of developing professional development policies that were aligned with the mandates of No Child Left Behind?

Table 3.2 *continued*

What is your school district's plan for providing professional development to veteran teachers as mandated in NCLB?	What is your perspective on providing the professional development to veteran teachers?	Are the procedures different for veteran teachers? If so, how are they different?
How were these policies different from the policies in place before NCLB?	How do you perceive that the new professional development policies will impact the school improvement plan?	What are the most difficult aspects of working with veteran teachers?
What challenges have you encountered in the implementation of these policies?		What are the plans for future professional development for veteran teachers?
What are your perspectives on the implementation of these policies in the school district?		

During the first interview, probing questions were asked as necessary to gain a clearer understanding and to seek clarification of the participants' perspectives. In addition, the researcher gathered artifacts in the form of documents of procedures and policies related to professional development for the respective school districts. Fieldnotes were also taken during the first interviews, recording the researcher's observations of the physical surroundings in the participants' offices and the participants' demeanor and body language during the interviews. Transcriptions of the first interviews were completed within two weeks of each interview. The researcher gave a copy of the transcription of the interview to each participant for their review to elicit comments or corrections.

The time and place for the second interviews had been agreed on at the close of the first interview with each participant. However, the researcher contacted each participant several days before the scheduled second interviews to confirm the date, time, and place and to remind the participants of the second interview. Again, each of the second interviews was conducted in the respective participant's office. At the beginning of the second interview, the researcher asked the

participants if they had anything to add or change concerning the accuracy of the transcripts of the first interview. During the second interview, the researcher asked questions based on transcriptions from the first interview and data collected from the school district documents. The researcher formulated probing questions to fully understand the participant's perspectives of providing professional development to veteran teachers in their respective districts. The researcher continued to clarify and to probe for responses from the participants until the researcher was satisfied that the data collected was accurate, and that the participants had every opportunity to share their perspectives. Table 3.3 contains sample questions asked to establish validity of the first interview and to further address each of the three research questions.

Table 3.3: *Sample Questions Asked in Interview #2 Aligned to Each Research Question*

Interview Questions to Establish Validity of First Interview	Interview Questions Aligned with Research Question # 1	Interview Questions Aligned with Research Question # 2	Interview Questions Aligned with Research Question # 3
Does the transcription of the first interview accurately reflect your answers?	Is there anything else you can add about the changes that were implemented as your district prepared to comply with NCLB?	Can you give me a "for instance" of when you talk with the veteran teachers?	It sounds as though you have a constant support system for veteran teachers here. Can you elaborate on this?
Is there anything that you would like to add to clarify the first interview?	Can you explain further your perspective on the procedures for professional development that your district had in place as the NCLB act became law?	Can you tell me more about your perspective on the district's school improvement plan, such as the process for developing the plan and your involvement in that process as it relates to professional development?	Explain the effects - negative or positive - at any point as you began to change your professional development delivery and plans.

Table 3.3 *continued*

May I contact you by phone or email if I find I have additional questions for clarification of this interview?	Explain further the process for developing the professional development policies that are now in place.	Do you find any particular type of course that is more effective with veteran teachers as opposed to other teachers?	For professional development, is there anything new on the horizon that's not in place yet?
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During the second interview, the researcher again recorded fieldnotes. After the transcriptions of the second interviews were completed, the participants were asked to review them for accuracy.

Questions asked in the second interview were more individualized in order to probe the individual participant's responses from the first interview. This allowed the researcher to more accurately record the perspective of each participant. For instance, one participant had stated that her district did not have a policy mandating professional development in compliance with NCLB. Further probing in the second interview revealed that although there was not a written board policy, the expectation that all teachers would comply with the plans and procedures developed in compliance with NCLB was part of the teachers' evaluations and, as such, was required as part of their job. Another participant talked more about the overall professional development program in the first interview. In the second interview, the researcher asked questions to determine the participant's perspective on providing professional development to veteran teachers both individually and as a group. The participant shared her perspectives on this in depth.

Field Methods

During both interviews, the researcher recorded fieldnotes. "Field notes are the fundamental database for constructing case studies and carrying out thematic cross-case analysis in qualitative research" (Patton, 2002, p. 305). Fieldnotes contained what each participant said

but also contained observations of the participants' reactions to questions and their demeanor during the interviews. For example, in the fieldnotes the researcher recorded the smile on Dr. Lilith Duke's face as she described the development of endorsement classes for teachers in the Delmas School District. The researcher also recorded a description of the participants' offices in the fieldnotes. Fieldnotes should contain observations, direct quotations, as well as the researchers own reflections on the experience (Patton, 2002). In addition, fieldnotes included the researcher's initial insights and reactions to the data collected. In addition to the researcher's notes, an audiotape of the interviews was used with permission of the participants. The audio taped interview was then transcribed into written form.

Artifacts were also collected from both school districts. The following is a summary of the six sources of data that should be collected for evidence in case studies (Yin, 1994):

1. Documentation such as letters, written reports of meetings, administrative documents, formal studies or evaluations, and articles appearing in mass media;
2. Archival records such as service records, organizational records, charts, and survey data;
3. Interviews;
4. Direct observations;
5. Participant-observations;
6. Physical observations. (pp. 79-89)

The researcher collected copies of school district policies, written procedures for professional development, professional development program descriptions, lists of professional learning courses offered, professional learning reports to the state, examples of professional development forms that teachers must complete, and job descriptions for each participant. For example, the board policy, Professional Development Opportunities, for the Mahan School District was obtained as an artifact. The researcher examined the following passage in the board policy for its relevance to providing professional development in the Mahan School District:

Besides providing opportunities for personal growth, professional learning is viewed as a necessary, continuous, and systematic effort to improve district programs by involving all employees in activities that improve their skills and broaden their perceptions. The Board encourages the ongoing training of Mahan School District personnel

The researcher also took fieldnotes recording the physical surroundings of the participants' workplaces. In addition, fieldnotes included notes about the participants' demeanor, body language, general attitude about their job, and reactions to the questions.

The researcher sought to discover emerging categories or patterns. Major concepts that emerged in the researcher's notes and the transcription tapes were mapped. Patterns in the documents were also mapped. According to Patton (2002), the building of typologies through logical analysis involves the following:

creating potential categories by crossing one dimension or typology with another, and then working back and forth between the data and one's logical constructions, filling in the resulting matrix. This logical system will create a new typology, all parts of which may or may not actually be represented in the data. (p. 468)

The researcher had participants examine the categories and mapping for accuracy. In addition, member checking was used throughout the first and second interviewing sessions. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) member checking serves the following purposes:

It provides the opportunity to assess intentionality;
It gives the respondent an immediate opportunity to correct errors and challenge what are perceived to be wrong interpretations;
It provides the respondent the opportunity to volunteer additional information;
It puts the respondent on record as having said certain things and having agreed to the correctness of the investigator's recording of them;
It provides an opportunity to summarize;
It provides the respondent an opportunity to give an assessment of overall adequacy in addition to confirming individual data points. (p. 314)

An example of using member checking occurred during the second interview with Dr. Lilith Duke of the Delmas School District after she had read the transcript of the first interview. In reference to providing professional development, Dr. Duke made a correction to the idea in the

first interview transcript that the Delmas School District began providing professional development for teachers to be highly qualified before NCLB. She said, “No, I don’t think we were ahead of the game. I think we were right on the beginning of the No Child process.”

Constant Comparative Method

As the researcher further analyzed the data, the constant comparative method was employed to further clarify the categories as they related to the research questions. The constant comparative method allows simultaneous and continuous collection and processing of data. The constant comparative method of data analysis occurs in four stages, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967). The stages are: (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory (p. 105). According to Glaser and Straus (1967), the constant comparative method is “concerned with generating many categories, properties, and hypotheses about general problems” (p. 104). Throughout the analysis process the researcher employed the constant comparative method to continually compare concepts as categories were developed and to compare categories to further clarify the relevance to the research questions.

Purposeful Selection

For this study, the researcher chose two large school systems in central Georgia. The participants were chosen through a process of purposeful selection. The researcher first looked at the geographical considerations. School systems in the Middle Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (MGRESA) district were considered because the researcher’s school system is in this district. Proximity was a consideration. There were seven school systems including the researcher’s school system in MGRESA. There were 2 large systems which had a student

enrollment of over 20,000. The 2 medium systems had a student enrollment of over 4,000. There were 3 small systems which had a student enrollment of less than 4000.

The researcher's system was one of the medium school systems, and, therefore, the medium systems were eliminated. The two larger systems were more conveniently located than the three smaller systems, and the two larger systems were also neighboring systems to the researcher's school system. The researcher had interest in the larger school systems and therefore chose them for the study.

Context of the Study

In response to NCLB, the state of Georgia adopted new professional development guidelines and standards aligned with the mandates of NCLB. The new guidelines were adopted in the fall of 2003. State rule 160-3-3-.04 required each school district in Georgia to adopt a professional learning plan for their district that would be in line with the mandates of NCLB. For this study, two large school districts in central Georgia were chosen.

Demographic Information: The Communities

The Delmas School District was located in an urban community. The 2000 census data showed a population of 153,887 of which approximately 50% were white, 47% African American, and 3% other. Between 1990 and 2000 the population in Delmas County increased by 2.5%. The overall poverty rate for families in Delmas County in 2000 was approximately 15.5%, and the per capita income was \$19,058. For the Delmas county population 25 years or older, 21% had not completed high school, 7% had less than a ninth grade education, 77% had a high school diploma or equivalent, and of those approximately 21% had a bachelor's degree or higher.

The Mahan School District was located in a community with both urban and rural areas. In the 2000 census, Mahan County had a population of 110,765 of which approximately 70.5%

were white, 24.5% African American, and 5% other. The population increased by approximately 19.5% from 1990 to 2000. The overall poverty rate for families in Mahan was approximately 8.4% and the per capita income was \$19,515. For the Mahan county population 25 years or older, 16% had not completed high school, 5% had less than a ninth grade education, 84% had a high school diploma or equivalent, and of those approximately 20% had a bachelor's degree or higher.

The School Districts

The Delmas School District had a student enrollment of 24,583 in 2004-2005 as reported by the state of Georgia with 27 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, and 5 high schools. The student population was approximately 72% black, 24% white, and 4% other. The graduation rate for the Delmas School District was 58.8% in 2005. The district had approximately 1542 pre-K-12 teachers.

The Mahan School District had a student enrollment of 23,088 in 2004-2005 as reported by the state of Georgia with 21 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, and 4 high schools. The student population was approximately 34% black, 59% white, and 7% other. The graduation rate for the Mahan School District was 77.5% in 2005. The district had approximately 1609 pre-K-12 teachers.

Participants

Both participants were central office administrators for professional development in their respective school districts. Dr. Lilith Duke, Director of Professional Learning for the Delmas School District, was a science teacher for 15 years prior to becoming a central office administrator. Her administrative experience in education has all been in the Delmas School District. Ann Overton, Coordinator of Professional Learning for the Mahan School District, was

a teacher, school counselor, and an instructional specialist with a state agency prior to becoming a central office administrator. Table 3.4 provides a comparison of the two participants.

Table 3.4: *Comparison of Participants*

	Dr. Lilith Duke	Ann Overton
District	The Delmas School District	The Mahan School District
Years in Education	29 years	15 years
Years in Present Position	7 years	2 years
Advanced Education Degrees	Masters in Science Education Specialist in Educational Leadership Doctorate in Educational Leadership	Masters in Middle Grades Education and Counseling Specialist in Educational Leadership

Data Analysis

Fieldnotes and transcriptions of the interviews were collected along with artifacts for the school districts. One of the purposes of data analysis is to answer the research questions. To do this, the data were analyzed to develop themes and categories. The coding process was used following Creswell's (2002) guidelines. Creswell developed seven steps for coding data into categories or themes. Although many codes may be developed during the initial stages of the data analysis, the data are typically categorized around a few major themes (Creswell, 2002). Creswell (2002) stated that there are several types of themes, and he grouped them accordingly into the following:

ordinary themes are what the researcher might have expected to find;
 unexpected themes are themes that were not expected to surface during the study;
 hard-to-classify themes are themes that contain ideas that may overlap into other themes;
 major and minor themes represent major ideas and secondary ideas in the data.
 (p. 271)

After each interview, as the researcher analyzed the fieldnotes and transcripts, key words and phrases were recorded. Codes were developed to represent each key word. A chart was then

developed with the codes and key words. As the researcher analyzed the data further, concepts began to emerge and the concepts were noted on the charts in relation to the codes and key words. The transcription line numbers were noted in the chart for the key words. Table 3.5 displays examples of how the researcher used coding while analyzing the transcripts to bring order to the analysis to analyze the participants' perspectives on professional development and veteran teachers.

Table 3.5: *Sample of Transcription Analysis*

Key Words	Line Numbers	Codes and Concepts
That there be no professional development that did not align with system improvement.	#294-295	PD Professional Development
The whole perception of "I've been here, done that"	#359	VT Veteran Teachers
Policy reflects that all be tied to the school improvement plan	#459	SIP School Improvement Plan
We wrote what we call implementation plans for all of the initiatives	#201	IM Implementation
Ensuring that we have high quality teachers.	#121	HQ Highly Qualified
Training our personnel to know about the 12 standards	#150	ST Standards
It has caused a great deal of change and with change there comes controversy and frustration.	#77	CH Change

The codes revealed concepts which developed in relation to a broad category, such as professional development. For instance, the data on professional development revealed the participants' perspectives on the changes, on effectiveness, on attitudes of veteran teachers, and on educators' perceptions about professional development. The data were further reduced, and concepts were charted into categories that emerged relative to each research question. Table 3.6 displays examples of the concepts and emerging categories relative to each research question.

Table 3.6: *Examples of Concepts and Emerging Categories Relative to Each Research Question*

Research Question	Concepts	Categories
What does NCLB mean to you relative to highly qualified? What does it mean to your teachers and to your school district?	Highly Qualified Teachers NCLB	Beliefs about providing education for all children Changes Teacher Effectiveness
What is your perspective on providing the professional development to veteran teachers?	Strategies Veteran Teachers	Individualized learning plans learning communities Resistance
What are the most difficult aspects of working with veteran teachers?	Changes	Resistance to change

In Table 3.7, the researcher has provided further explanation and definitions of the categories as they relate to the research questions.

Table 3.7: *Definition of Categories Derived from Data as They Relate to the Research Questions*

Research Question	Concepts	Categories
What does NCLB mean to you relative to highly qualified? What does it mean to your teachers and to your school district?	Beliefs about providing education for all children	The perspectives of the participants revealed their beliefs about children learning and the mission of their districts to provide for all children
	Changes	The participants perspectives on change revealed frustrations, victories, and beliefs about change
	Teacher Effectiveness	The perspectives of participants on teacher effectiveness revealed their beliefs about the quality professional development and the relationship between teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Table 3.7 *continued*

What is your perspective on providing the professional development to veteran teachers?	Learning plans	The participants revealed their perspectives on professional development based on learning plans as opposed to workshops.
	Learning communities	Perspectives on providing veteran teachers with group and team professional learning opportunities were shared.
		The participants discussed their perspectives on the veteran teachers' resistance to change and to professional development that was not a workshop style activity.
What are the most difficult aspects of working with veteran teachers?	Resistance to change	The participants discussed their perspectives on the veteran teachers' resistance to change and to professional development that was not a workshop style activity.

Trustworthiness

To establish trustworthiness, “a qualitative analyst returns to the data over and over again to see if the constructs, categories, explanations, and interpretations make sense, if they really reflect the nature of the phenomena” (Patton, 2002, p. 570). Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed that qualitative researchers should consider four questions when addressing the issue of establishing trustworthiness. The four questions are:

1. Truth Value: How can one establish confidence in the “truth” of the findings?
2. Applicability: How can one determine the extent to which the findings of a particular inquiry have applicability to other contexts?
3. Consistency: How can one determine whether the finding of an inquiry would be repeated if replicated?
4. Neutrality: How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are determined by the subjects and not by the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the inquirer? (p. 290)

Validity

According to Merriam (1998), in qualitative research it is important to “understand the perspectives of those involved in the phenomenon of interest, to uncover the complexity of human behavior in a contextual framework, and to present a holistic interpretation of what is happening” (p. 203). Merriam (1998) suggested six strategies that the researcher use to establish internal validity:

- Triangulation
- Member checks
- Long-term observation
- Peer examination
- Participatory or collaborative modes of research
- Researcher’s biases. (pp. 204-205)

To enhance internal validity, this study used triangulation, member checks, peer examination, and researcher’s biases.

Triangulation was employed so that both interviewing and document analysis were used. According to Patton (2002), studies that rely more on only one method are more subject to error. Using more than one method allowed the researcher to analyze data for consistencies and inconsistencies. The use of different kinds of data allowed the researcher to look for inconsistencies. Different kinds of data may reflect the findings in a different light. The different data gave the researcher the opportunity to gain better insight into the phenomena being studied (Patton, 2002). The following data forms were used in this study:

- Board of Education Policy
- Board of Education Job Descriptions
- School District Comprehensive Professional Learning Program Reports for the Georgia Department of Education
- Professional Learning Guidelines
- Professional Learning Handbook
- Professional Learning Lists of Courses Offerings
- Individual Learning Plan Log Forms and Implementation Forms
- Web Page Forms for Professional Learning Course Descriptions and Registration

In this study, the use of interviews and documents allowed the researcher to analyze data looking for consistencies and inconsistencies. Triangulation increased the probability that “the findings of the study will be credible” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 305).

Member checks were also used to validate the data throughout both interviews. During the second interview, transcriptions of the first interview were given to the participants so that each participant could verify the information that was recorded. Each participant’s comments were recorded and added to the data. In addition, the researcher’s initial analysis of the documents was shared with each participant for review. The perspectives of the participants on the findings were recorded and included in the research study.

A third method of validation used was peer examination. Over the period of the study, the researcher asked colleagues to review and comment on the findings. The comments of the peers reviewing the findings were included and identified separately in the research study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), using peers to review findings increased the credibility of the study. One of the advantages of using peer examination is that it can expose biases that the researcher may have. Thus, the use of peer examination served two purposes.

The final method of validation used was clarifying the researcher’s biases. In addition to peer examination to expose biases, the researcher had to be constantly aware of remaining neutral. Since the researcher was not actively engaged in providing professional development in the school district in which she worked, she had no preconceived ideas. The researcher sought to clarify her biases by providing personal and professional information.

1. The researcher was a white female who has been in education for 14 years.
2. The researcher held a Bachelor’s Degree with a major in Latin and a minor in French and Education, and the researcher held a Master’s Degree in Educational Administration and Supervision
3. The researcher was certified in Latin (6-12) and Educational Leadership
4. The researcher’s professional experience in education was as follows:

- Latin and English teacher in a public high school, grades 9 to 12, for 10 years
 - Administrator of Human Resources for public school district for three years
5. The researcher had also worked outside of education as an eligibility and service case worker with the Family and Children Services and had worked in the offices of family businesses.
 6. The researcher had no experience in supervising teachers in professional development, but she had experience as a teacher in participating in professional development prior to NCLB.
 7. The researcher was responsible for ensuring that her own school system's teachers were highly qualified.
 8. The researcher has her own pre-conceived notions about the meaning of highly qualified.

Transferability

While it is not the responsibility of the qualitative researcher to establish an “index of transferability, it is his or her responsibility to provide the data base that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). In this study, the researcher sought to clearly present the findings of the data. According to Merriam (1998), generalizability may be a limitation to case studies. In qualitative research, the case study is used “because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many” (p. 208).

Dependability and Confirmability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the establishment of validity requires that credibility and thus dependability exists. However, further establishment of dependability was achieved through the use of an anonymous auditor who reviewed the dissertation findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In addition, the accuracy of the process used for the study was confirmed by an expert; the data collected was confirmed through the participants; the researcher kept the raw data and all other artifacts related to the analysis and processing of the data, and the researcher's major professor monitored data collection and analysis procedures.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY AND PARTICIPANT PROFILES

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of central office administrators who are responsible for professional development. The researcher sought to discover what central office administrators were doing to provide veteran teachers with ongoing professional development that meets the mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The following research questions were explored in this study:

1. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on the process of developing and implementing the policies and procedures adopted by their school districts to provide ongoing professional learning activities that provide support for veteran teachers to be highly qualified?
2. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on providing veteran teachers with professional development activities which are aligned with the school district's comprehensive improvement plan?
3. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on implementing changes for veteran teachers in professional development activities as a result of The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?

This chapter reports the contexts of each school district, the profiles of each participant, and a description of professional development in each district. This study examined the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development in two large school districts in the southern half of Georgia. The two districts were comparable in size, but the demographics were different. One district, the Delmas School District, was a predominately urban area and the other district, the Mahan School District, was both urban and rural. The districts were chosen because

each of the districts employed a central office administrator for professional development whose sole job was professional development.

Delmas School District

The Community

The Delmas School District was located in Georgia in a predominately urban community with a population of 153,887 according to the 2000 United States census. The population increased by 2.5% from 1990 to 2000. The 2004 US census population estimate was 155,170. In 2004, the per capita income was \$29,405, and the average number of food stamp households was 11,377.

Census data showed that the population shifted from 1990 to 2000 with a decrease in the white population of approximately 7% and an increase in the African American population of approximately 5%. In 1990, the population of Delmas County was approximately 57% white, 42% African American, and 1% other. In 2000, the population of Delmas County was approximately 50% white, 47% African American, and 3% other. Census data showed an increase in the population of American Indians or Alaskans, Asians, and Hispanics from 1990 to 2000. From 2000 to 2005, the population of Delmas County grew less than 1%. The population increased from 153,887 in 2000 to 154,918 in 2005. This was a total increase of 1031 persons.

In the 2000 census, the economic indicators showed that approximately 19% of individuals were below the poverty level. The overall poverty rate for families was approximately 15.5%. However, the percent of families below the poverty level with a female head of household and no husband present was approximately 37.7%. The per capita income in 2000 was \$19,058.

For the Delmas County population 25 years or older, the 2000 census educational attainment data revealed that approximately 77% had a high school diploma or equivalent and, of those, approximately 21% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Approximately 21% had not completed high school, and 7% of the population had less than a ninth grade education.

The School District

The Delmas School District had a student enrollment of 24,583 in 2004-2005 as reported by the state of Georgia. Enrollment in 2000-2001 was 24,334 and enrollment dropped slightly for 2001-2002, rose in 2002-2003, and dropped again in 2003-2004. The overall change in student enrollment from 2000-2001 to 2004-2005 was an increase of about one percent. Table 4.1 shows the demographics of the 2004-2005 student enrollment data by subgroups.

Table 4.1: *Delmas School District 2004-2005 Student Demographics*

Student Subgroups	Percentage of students
Asian	1%
Black	72%
Hispanic	1%
Native American/Alaskan	0%
White	24%
Multiracial	1%
Students with Disabilities	11%
Limited English Proficient	1%
Eligible for Free and Reduced Meals	68%
Migrant	0%

In 2004-2005, the Delmas School District had 27 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, and 5 high schools. The district also had one career center and five specialty schools. The specialty

schools served students with disabilities, pre-school students, and included a center for teen parents to earn a high school degree and as well as a center for students to earn a high school degree in a non-traditional environment. The state report card showed that four elementary schools, five middle schools, three high schools, and one career center did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2004-2005. However, from 1994 through 2002, the Delmas School District had three schools which were Pay for Performance award recipients. Three of the Delmas School District schools were named Georgia Schools of Excellence between 1984 and 2003.

Student test data for the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) for the 2004-2005 school year showed that the passing rate for 4th grade students was highest on the reading and social studies tests with 81% passing each test and lowest on the math test with 68% passing. The passing rate for the state for 2004-2005 was 87% for reading, 88% for social studies, and 75% for math. The 2004-2005 Delmas School District CRCT scores were an improvement over the 2000-2001 passing rates of 78% in reading and 55% in math. Social Studies CRCT was not given in 2000-2001. For 8th grade students in the Delmas School District, the highest passing rate on the CRCT was in reading with 76% passing and the lowest passing rate was in math with 52% passing.

On the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT) for students who were first time test takers in the Delmas School District, the highest passing rate for 2004-2005 was on the English/language arts test with 94% passing, and the lowest passing rate was on the science test with 54% passing. The Delmas School District had 56% of the 2005 graduates eligible for the

HOPE ¹ scholarship. Student data listed by the Georgia Department of Education showed that the graduation rate for the Delmas School District was 58.8% in 2005. That was more than the 2003 graduation rate of 54%, but less than the 2004 graduation rate of 60.9%

In the 2004-2005 school year, 194 students in the Delmas School District took the American College Test (ACT) test and the average composite score was 18 compared to 20 for the state of Georgia. Students taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) numbered 664, and the SAT composite score was 901 for 2004-2005 compared to the state score of 989.

The Delmas School District operates a full day kindergarten program and offers a full curriculum for students in grades Pre-K - 12. The instructional courses in the elementary grades include the areas of language arts, reading, math, science, foreign language, history, and geography. Special programs are available to students with special needs. Remedial programs and Title I programs are also provided.

The middle schools in the Delmas School District offer programs that support students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades as they transition from the elementary grades to the high school level. Courses offered in the middle schools include the core academic courses of English/language arts, math, reading, science, and social studies. A number of connection classes such as technology and art are offered to introduce students to courses and careers as they prepare for high school.

The high school curriculum courses for the Delmas School District are in compliance with state graduation requirements. Core academic classes in English/language arts, math,

¹ HOPE stands for Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally. The Georgia HOPE Scholarship fund awards financial assistance Georgia students attending state colleges, universities and technical colleges. Financed by the Georgia Lottery, the scholarship pays for the tuition, books and fees of eligible Georgia students who maintain a “B” average. The financial aid offices of 105 postsecondary schools in Georgia determine HOPE eligibility.

science, and social studies are offered at all levels. Students may choose to follow the college prep program or the technology/career program. The college prep program requires that students take more courses in math and also take two years of a foreign language. Students may also choose to take a wide variety of courses offered in addition to the core academic classes such as band, chorus, visual arts, physical education, business education, agriculture, and numerous technology courses. Cooperative and apprenticeship programs are offered. The Delmas School District also offers advanced placement courses. The Delmas School District offers an International Baccalaureate program at one high school. Two high schools are magnet schools offering programs such as fine arts and legal/law enforcement.

The district employed 1542 full-time pre-K-12 teachers and 86 part-time pre-K-12 teachers. Of those teachers, approximately 43% held a master's degree or higher and approximately 8% held a specialist degree or higher. Less than one percent held a doctorate. In Non-Title I schools, 95.55% of the teachers were highly qualified, and in Title I schools, 91.19% were highly qualified. According to Dr. Lilith Duke, teachers who were not highly qualified were enrolled in classes or were planning to take a test to become highly qualified. Table 4.2 contains the distribution of pre-K-12 teachers in number of years of experience.

Table 4.2: *Delmas School District 2004-2005 Teachers' Years of Experience*

Years of Teaching Experience	PreK-12 Teachers
Less than 1 year	141
1 – 10 years	588
11 – 20 years	449
21 – 30 years	332
More than 30 years	118
Average years of experience	13.96

Approximately 8% of the teachers had less than 1 year of experience while 36% of the teachers had between 1 and 10 years of experience, 27% between 11 and 20 years, 20% between 21 and

30 years, and about 7% of the teachers had more than 30 years of experience. Of the teaching staff, 84% were female and 16% male. The race/ethnicity percentages for teachers were 38% black, 60% white, and 2% other. The ratio of teachers to students was 1 teacher to every 16 students. The ratio of teachers to administrators was 15 teachers to 1 administrator. Teachers worked 190 days per year. The average annual salary for teachers was \$44,283.67, and the average daily salary was \$232.40.

The Delmas School District employed 102 full-time administrators and 7 part-time administrators. The average number of years of experience for administrators was 22.78 years. All administrators had a Masters Degree or higher. Approximately 48% of administrators held a Specialist Degree and 22% held a Doctoral Degree. The percentage of female administrators was 80%, while the percentage of male administrators was 20%. Approximately 50% of the administrators were African American and 50% white.

The Delmas School District adheres to state rules for teacher certification. The state approved certification fields cover the teaching fields for core academic areas in grades K through 12 as well as the fields for courses such as technology, agricultural education, trade and industrial education, foreign languages, special education, art, dance, drama, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), gifted, health/physical education, and music. Special education certification fields are available. Administrators must have a state certificate in Educational Leadership.

Dr. Lilith Duke

Dr. Lilith Duke was Director of Professional Learning for the Delmas School District. Both interviews were held at Dr. Duke's office at the Delmas School District Board of Education. The board of education was housed in a downtown bank building and occupied

several floors of the building above the bank offices. Dr. Duke's office was designated as the Office of Professional Learning and was located in the vicinity of other central office administrators for the Delmas School District. The office of Professional Learning was composed of an outer office and Dr. Duke's office. The outer office housed two secretaries, office equipment, and a waiting area with chairs. The office had shelves and bookcases with materials and information for professional development courses in the Delmas School District.

Dr. Duke's office was nicely arranged for work, with a centrally located desk and chair and a work table behind her desk chair that allowed her to access her printer and files without leaving her chair. File cabinets and shelves were against two walls. Two walls were windows. The office was full of thick binders, books, and stacks of documents. The office was inviting with two comfortable cloth armchairs opposite Dr. Duke's desk and several plants, pictures, and other decorative items. Dr. Duke seemed at home and relaxed in her office. One had the sense that she spent a lot of time there and felt comfortable with the arrangement.

The first interview was held on a Tuesday morning and lasted 1 hour and 25 minutes. When the researcher arrived for the first interview, Dr. Duke's secretary said that she would be available in a few minutes. Dr. Duke was in a meeting in another office with several central office administrators. As the researcher waited in the outer office, she observed there was a steady flow of people coming in and out of the office, and there were several phone calls coming in to the office. When Dr. Duke arrived, she spoke to the researcher and said she would be "right there." She made several trips between her office and the secretary and seemed to be giving instructions to the secretary. She seemed hurried, but when she turned her attention to the researcher and invited her into her office, she sighed and apologized for the delay. As she invited the researcher to be seated, she shut the door to her office. She smiled and took her seat. From

that point forward, throughout the entire interview, her attention was fully turned to the interview. There were no interruptions, and Dr. Duke did not seem rushed. She relaxed and appeared to completely immerse herself into the topic and into answering the questions presented to her.

The second interview was held approximately two weeks after the first interview. The second interview was held on a Tuesday afternoon and lasted approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. Dr. Duke was in her office when the researcher arrived. She invited the researcher in, shut the door, and sat down to begin the interview. Dr. Duke had reviewed the transcript and agreed that it was accurate. However, she did give some additional information for some of the answers on the first transcript.

Dr. Lilith Duke holds a B.S. in Chemistry, a M.Ed. in Science Education, and an Ed.S. and Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. She holds teacher certification in Georgia for Science, Gifted, and Support Specialist. She also holds certification in Georgia for Educational Leadership. Dr. Duke was pre-med in college and changed to education toward the end of her college career. She explained:

My initial career decision was that I was thinking I wanted to be a doctor- and so my undergraduate degree being in Chemistry, I did not apply to medical school - I decided that during the time that I was in school earning that degree that I did not want to pursue the medical doctor field and so I decided at that point to go into education. So I actually had to do a summer program in order to earn my certification. I actually started as a provisionally certified teacher in 1977.

Dr. Duke has been in education for 29 years. “I taught for 15 years, mostly math and science. I have actually been doing this job for 14 years.”

She was a science teacher in two different large school districts in middle Georgia for 15 years. However, all of her administrative experience in education has been in the Delmas School District. At the district level, she was Science Coordinator for four years, Technology

Coordinator for two years, and then she became Science Consultant in the Staff Development Department. She assumed the position of Interim Director of Staff Development, and in 2000, she became the Director of Staff Development, now called Director of Professional Learning. Dr. Duke has been active in professional organizations and has served in leadership capacities in state and national staff development organizations as well as science education organizations. Dr. Duke also takes an active part in several community organizations.

Dr. Duke was very composed and thoughtful throughout the interviews. She carefully considered her answers and thoroughly answered the questions. Dr. Duke believes that all children can learn. “You have to believe that they all have the capacity to learn.” She believes that in order for No Child Left Behind to succeed everyone must believe that all children can learn. She believes that teachers’ beliefs will change about instruction as they experience the successes of new ways of instruction through professional development. “You change them by them seeing for themselves that what they are doing is allowing all children to learn.” She believes that teacher effectiveness impacts student learning and that improving teacher effectiveness is a major part of professional development. She recognizes the fears and frustrations of veteran teachers as they try new strategies and participate in activities to give them the credentials to be highly qualified. She further believes in the least amount of restriction on teachers that is possible regarding policies and mandates. She fully supports the fact that the Delmas School District has not mandated through board policy compliance with professional development changes. She considers board policies to be unnecessary as long as teachers and other staff are cooperating in the changes.

Dr. Duke is fully supportive of the Delmas School District superintendent, and she admires the superintendent’s leadership in improving the quality of professional development in

the Delmas School District. Dr. Duke is very knowledgeable of state and federal regulations for professional development and highly qualified teachers. She is personally involved in writing and preparing courses for professional development for teachers. She involves herself in her job in such way that it is more than “just a job.” She is loyal to the Delmas School District and is interested in all facets of instruction. Clearly, professional development in the Delmas School District is very important to Dr. Duke, both personally and professionally.

In 2005-2006, Dr. Duke was the instructor for the following professional learning classes offered in the Delmas School District: Inductive Learning, Critical Thinking/Learning Styles, and Teacher Support Specialist. Her willingness to not only administrate professional learning in Delmas but to take an active role in teaching the classes is illustrative of her devotion and interest in the teachers and children of the Delmas School District.

Professional Development in the Delmas School District

Professional development in the Delmas School District is administered by the Director of Professional Learning. However, the director, Dr. Lilith Duke collaborated with other central office administrators in planning professional development. Dr. Duke submits a proposed professional learning comprehensive plan to the school board for approval at the beginning of each school year. At the end of each year, the district is required to submit to the state a Professional Learning Comprehensive Plan² report of professional learning that was implemented during the school year. This plan is developed by the district’s Professional Learning Advisory Council which consists of assistant superintendents, directors of instructional

² The Georgia Department of Education requires that each school district submit annually a Comprehensive Professional Learning Program Report to the state. The report is a summary of the school district’s Comprehensive Professional Learning Program including the number of activities, the number of participants, the expenditures, the number of professional credits awarded, and a narrative summary of the program.

programs, principals, and representatives of the school staff. All professional development activities must be included in the district's annual Professional Learning Comprehensive Plan. The plan must include activities that address the needs of personnel at the district level, the school level, and the department levels, such as technology and curriculum. The plan must also include activities that address the needs for individual requests for specific opportunities for professional growth. The professional development programs are funded in order of priority according to state guidelines³. The plan is reviewed by the Director of Professional Learning before completing the budget.

The Delmas School District offers professional development courses in many areas. For teachers who need courses or professional development activities not offered within the district, the procedures for requesting professional learning outside of the district are available through the Professional Learning Department. Professional development courses offered by the Delmas School District are readily available to the Delmas School District staff. The Delmas School District web site posts professional learning course offerings for an entire school year divided into winter, spring and summer offerings. The online course descriptions give the following information:

- Course name
- A brief description of the course
- Number of professional learning unit (PLU) credits that may be earned through participation in the course
- Focus group (the group of teachers for whom the course is intended)
- Dates and times
- Instructor
- Location

³ The Georgia State Education Rule 160-3-3.10 entitled *Professional Learning Unit (PLU) Program Approval* specifies state guidelines for professional development programs.

Registration procedures are listed with the courses offerings. Staff wishing to take a course must first register and then complete a professional leave form and forward that to the office of Professional Learning for approval. Specific instructions are given for canceling a registration for a course within the district, and there is a fine if the cancellation request is not received at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the class. Professional learning courses in the Delmas School District include academic content area courses as well as courses on learning styles, classroom management, exceptional children, poverty, communications with students and parents, and instructional strategies. There were 28 courses listed on the web site in the 2005-2006 school year in the Delmas School District. Two courses, Middle Grades Literacy and Middle Grades Writing, were offered twice each during the year. In addition to the Delmas School District courses, a link to registration for courses offered through the state Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) was provided on the Delmas School District 2005-2006 Course Offerings web page.

At the end of each fiscal year, a professional learning program summary is submitted to the board of education. The plan includes highlights of initiatives adopted by the district for professional learning. In the plan submitted in August 2005, the following district or department focused initiatives were listed:

- Individual Learning Plan for Highly Qualified Teacher
- Comprehensive Literacy
- Leadership Development
- Induction Program for New Teachers
- Framework for Understanding Poverty Sessions
- Technology Training
- Content Specific Classes
- Support Staff Workshop Sessions

The Delmas School District submits a report to the state each year detailing the number of professional learning activities completed by participants in the professional learning program,

the number of participants, and the expenditures for professional learning. The report is issued at the end of the summer following the school year in which the professional learning activities took place. In the report submitted to the state in August 2005, the Delmas School District had 299 professional learning activities completed by employees. Total participation in professional learning activities in the Delmas School District was 6,187 certified staff and 356 leadership staff, 31 paraprofessional staff, 109 noncertified staff. The staff participation number reflects staff who may have participated in more than one activity. Therefore, the number is more than the actual number of employees in the district. The total number of professional learning units (PLU) credits earned was 4,029. Total expenditures for professional learning in Delmas were \$3,217,835.00. This reflects costs for professional learning and includes expenditures for district professional development courses as well as travel and cost associated with activities outside of the district. The Delmas School District data for this report appears later in Table 4.12 to provide comparison to the data for the Mahan School District.

Mahan School District

The Community

The Mahan School District was located in a community with both urban and rural areas with a total population of 110,765 listed in the United States 2000 census. The population increased by approximately 19.5% from 1990 to 2000. The 2004 population census estimate was 123,753. In 2004, the per capita income was \$26,379, and the number average number of food stamp households was 4,579.

Census data showed that the population shifted from 1990 to 2000 with a decrease in the white population of approximately 6% and an increase in the African American population of approximately 5%. In 1990, the population of Mahan County was approximately 76% white,

22% African American, and 2% other. In 2000, the population of Mahan County was approximately 70.5% white, 24.5% African American, and 5% other. Census data showed an increase in the population of American Indians or Alaskans, Asians, and Hispanics from 1990 to 2000. From 2000 to 2005 the population of Mahan County grew 12%. The population increased from 110,765 in 2000 to 126,163 in 2005. This was a total increase of 15,389 persons.

In the 2000 US census, the economic indicators showed that close to 10% of individuals were below the poverty level. The overall poverty rate for families was approximately 8.4%. However, the percentage of families below the poverty level with a female head of household and no husband present was approximately 29.9%. In 2000, the per capita income was \$19,515.

The educational attainment data in the 2000 census revealed that for the county population 25 years or older approximately 84% had a high school diploma or equivalent, and of those 20% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Approximately 16% of the population had not completed high school and 5% had less than a 9th grade education.

The School District

The Mahan School District had a student enrollment of 23,088 in 2004-2005 as reported by the state of Georgia. Enrollment in 2000-2001 was 20,767 and enrollment rose steadily in 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 but dropped slightly to 22,996 in 2003-2004. The overall change in student enrollment from 2000-2001 to 2004-2005 was a 10 percent increase. Table 4.3 shows the demographics of the 2004-2005 student enrollment data by subgroups.

Table 4.3: *Mahan School District 2004-2005 Student Demographics*

Student Subgroups	Percentage of students
Asian	2%
Black	34%

Table 4.3 *continued*

Hispanic	3%
Native American/Alaskan	0%
White	59%
Multiracial	2%
Multiracial	2%
Students with Disabilities	13%
Limited English Proficient	1%
Eligible for Free and Reduced Meals	41%
Migrant	1%

In 2004-2005, the Mahan School District had 21 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, and 4 high schools. The district also had one career center and two alternative schools. The state report card for 2004-2005 showed that all the Mahan School District elementary schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), but two middle schools, two high schools, the career center, and the alternative school did not make AYP. Between 1984 and 2003, the Mahan School District had 25 Georgia Schools of Excellence. From 2003 to 2005, the Mahan School District had one Blue Ribbon School.

Student test data for the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) for the 2004-2005 school year showed that the passing rate for 4th grade students was highest on the social studies and science tests with a passing rate of 92%, and the lowest on the math test with a passing rate of 80% on each test. The passing rates for the state for 2004-2005 were 88% for social studies and 75% for math. In 2000-2001, the passing scores for the Mahan School District were 65% in math. For 8th grade students in 2004-2005, the highest passing rate on the CRCT was in social studies with 92% passing, and the lowest passing rate was in math with 81% passing.

On the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHS GT) for students who were first time test takers, the highest passing rate for 2004-2005 was on the English/language arts test with 94% passing, and the lowest scores were on the science test with 73% passing. The Mahan School District had 53% of the 2005 graduates eligible for the HOPE scholarship. Student data listed by the Georgia Department of Education showed that the graduation rate for the Mahan School District was 77.5% in 2005. That was more than the 2004 graduation rate of 71%, but less than the 2003 graduation rate of 69.3%

In the 2004-2005 school year, 252 students in the Mahan School District took the ACT test, and the average composite score was 19.3 compared to 20 for the state of Georgia. Students taking the SAT numbered 807 and the average SAT composite score was 987 for 2004-2005. The average SAT score for the state in 2004-2005 was 989.

The Mahan School District provides a broad curriculum for grades pre-K through 12. Children who will be five years old before September 1 may enroll in an all day kindergarten program. The elementary curriculum includes a language program with an emphasis on reading, writing, spelling, and grammar. The curriculum also includes math, science, social studies, music, art, health, safety, and physical education. Special education and gifted programs are provided. In addition, the Title I programs, including Remedial Education and Special Assistance Programs are available.

The middle school format is utilized in the Mahan School District for grades six through eight. This format provides a supportive instructional environment for students as they transition between the elementary and high school levels. The core academic courses are English/language arts, math, reading, science, and social studies. In addition, connection classes are offered to introduce students to a wide variety of courses and careers.

The high school curriculum includes all courses in compliance with state graduation requirements. The core academic courses of English/language arts, math, science, and social studies are offered at all levels. Students may choose to follow the college prep program or the technology/career program. The college prep program requires that students take more courses in math and also take two years of a foreign language. A wide variety of courses are offered in addition to the core academic classes such as band, chorus, visual arts, physical education, Air Force Junior ROTC, business education, agriculture, and numerous technology courses. Cooperative and apprenticeship programs are offered. The Mahan School District also offers advanced placement courses and joint enrollment programs.

The district employed 1609 full-time pre-K-12 teachers and 33 part-time pre-K-12 teachers in 2004-2005. Of those teachers, approximately 57% held a master's degree or higher, and approximately 18% held a specialist degree or higher. Less than one percent held a doctorate. In Non-Title I schools, 99.29% of the teachers were highly qualified, and in Title I schools 99.48% were highly qualified. Ms. Overton, Coordinator of Professional Learning, explained that the teachers who were not highly qualified were taking courses or a content competency test to become highly qualified. Table 4.4 contains the distribution of pre-K-12 teachers in number of years of experience.

Table 4.4: *Mahan School District 2004-2005 Teachers' Years of Experience*

Years of Teaching Experience	Pre-K-12 Teachers
Less than 1 year	88
1 – 10 years	802
11 – 20 years	433
21 – 30 years	267
More than 30 years	52
Average years of experience	11.81

Approximately 5% of the teachers had less than 1 year of experience, while 49% had between 1 and 10 years of experience, 26% between 11 and 20 years, 16% between 21 and 30 years, and about 3% of the teachers had more than 30 years of experience. Of the teaching staff, 84% were female and 16% male. The race/ethnicity percentages for teachers were 19% African American, 79% white, and 1% other. The ratio of teachers to students was 1 teacher to every 15 students. The ratio of teachers to administrators was 12 teachers to 1 administrator. Teachers worked 190 days per year. The average annual salary for teachers was \$47,349.64 and the average daily salary was \$248.30.

The Mahan School District employed 124 full-time administrators and 15 part-time administrators. The average number of years of experience for administrators was 19.92 years. Most administrators held a Master's Degree or higher but four percent held only a Bachelor's Degree. The percentage of administrators with a Master's Degree was 17%. Approximately 67% of administrators held a Specialist Degree and 12% held a Doctoral Degree. The percentage of female administrators was 60%, while the percentage of male administrators was 40%. Approximately 25% of the administrators were African American and 75% were white.

The Mahan School District adheres to state rules for teacher certification. The state approved certification fields cover the teaching fields for core academic areas in grades K through 12 as well as the fields for courses such as technology, agricultural education, trade and industrial education, foreign languages, special education, art, dance, drama, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), gifted, health/physical education, and music. Special education certification fields are available. Administrators must have a state certificate in Educational Leadership.

Ann Overton

Ann Overton was the Coordinator of Professional Learning for the Mahan School District. Both interviews were held in Ms. Overton's office at the Mahan School District Board of Education office. The Board of Education central offices for the Mahan School District are housed in buildings on one of Mahan's School District's old school campuses in a mid-size town which is the county seat. The main school building in the complex has been remodeled and it houses the office of the superintendent, offices of some assistant superintendents, as well as other business offices for the district. Ms Overton's office is located adjacent to the main building in an old school building structure which is in the process of being remodeled. The structure consists of several buildings connected by covered walkways. Ms. Overton gave the researcher detailed instructions for finding her office. Although signs were posted because of the construction, the office was difficult to find for a first time visitor. Ms Overton's directions were very helpful. There were no other administrative offices located next to Ms. Overton's office at the time of the interviews. After walking through dusty hallways, the researcher found Ms. Overton's building and located her office. The office of professional learning is quite large and consists of a large outer office and Ms. Overton's office. The offices had been recently remodeled with fresh paint and new carpet. Ms. Overton's office is accessed through a door toward the back of the large office. A secretary's area is located to the side of the main office and the remainder of the large office is dedicated to a huge conference table and chairs. The large office contains bookcases, and the office was full of professional learning binders, books, and other items which were stacked up or in boxes in the large room.

Ms. Overton's office was very roomy and contained file cabinets, her desk, chair, computer, and printer, all arranged in an efficient manner. There were also comfortable chairs for

visitors. A bookcase was on one wall. Another wall was windows which looked out at another wing of the building. Ms. Overton had pictures and plants decorating her office which made it an inviting area for visitors.

The first interview was held on a Thursday morning and lasted 90 minutes. When the researcher arrived, the secretary greeted her and buzzed Ms. Overton. Ms. Overton asked the researcher to be seated in the large room while she finished a task. It was very quiet in the office while the researcher waited. No one else came in the office and the phones did not ring. After several trips between her office and the outer office, Ms. Overton invited the researcher into the office. She sat down in the chair at her desk and invited the researcher to be seated in one of the chairs on the side of the desk. Ms. Overton explained how busy she was, but after the interview began, she relaxed and seemed to enjoy responding to the interview questions. During the first interview, several times she reached behind her desk into one of the file cabinets and pulled out a document to help explain what she was saying. She seemed very methodical and organized both in her answers and in the arrangement of her office and files. She was relaxed and confident in her answers. She seemed to especially enjoy discussing professional development.

The second interview was held on a Tuesday morning in Ms. Overton's office and lasted 70 minutes. When the researcher arrived this time, the secretary greeted her, and Ms. Overton was in the outer office working on some professional learning materials that were spread out on the huge conference table. She explained that they were preparing for a conference. After she gave the secretary instructions on continuing to compile the notebooks, Ms. Overton invited the researcher into her office. Again, she took her place behind her desk, and the researcher sat in the chair next to the desk. Ms. Overton had reviewed the transcript from the first interview and had

nothing to add or to correct. At first, she seemed rushed and distracted, but after a few minutes, she relaxed and turned her attention fully to the interview.

Although Ms. Overton was the Coordinator of Professional Learning for the Mahan School District at the time of the interviews, she explained that she would be promoted to Director of Professional Learning for the 2006-2007 school year. When the previous director had retired the year before, Ms. Overton assumed the duties of director. She was very pleased that the administration had decided to give her the title of director. She explained,

I was performing the same duties as she did, plus I received a lot of additional duties that she did not have. I asked the assistant superintendent for human resources and the assistant superintendent for school operations if they would consider raising my position based upon the duties and responsibilities that I had, and they said they had no problem. They were very complimentary and very helpful and I really appreciate that.

Ms. Overton has her B.S. and her M.Ed. in Middle Grades Education. She received her Ed.S. in Educational Leadership. Ms. Overton's Georgia certification areas are Middle Grades, School Counselor, Reading Specialist, Instructional Supervision, and Educational Leadership.

Ms. Overton has been in education for 15 years. She was a teacher for two years and then became a school counselor. As a school counselor, she worked at middle, high, and elementary schools. She enjoyed the experience of working with students across all grade levels. Through counseling, Ms. Overton became aware of the need to help children who could not read. She went back to school to get a reading endorsement so that she could be more knowledgeable about helping the students. Twice she had the opportunity to start counseling programs in brand new elementary schools. Before Ms. Overton came to her present position in the Mahan School District, she worked as an Instructional Specialist at a state Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) for four years. As the Instructional Specialist, she worked with seven school districts. However, she missed being in "a single school district with a common mission." She explained,

“I missed the camaraderie of being in a system working on a common mission to achieve.” She was happy to become part of the Mahan School District administrative team where she has been the Coordinator for Professional Learning for two years. Ms. Overton was a member of the professional organizations for staff development at both the state and national level; and she was chosen to attend the National Academy of the National Staff Development Council. She was very proud of being chosen. She expounded,

The National Staff Development Council has a national academy open to 75 people nationwide, and you have to apply to get into it, and I was accepted in that last year. So, I’ve been attending those academic sessions and it’s been wonderful. There are a lot of things that have helped me. It’s time consuming, but that’s okay. You pull a lot from it to use in your job.

Ms. Overton was very focused in her answers during the interviews. She was confident in her answers and gave very detailed answers. She expressed how much she had enjoyed working with children during the time that she was a teacher and counselor, and she believed that it was very important for all teachers to be highly qualified. She very strongly believed that professional development should be based on the 12 Standards developed by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) and adopted by her district. “If those 12 Standards are in place, students are going to learn at higher levels and they are going to achieve.” Ms. Overton believes that teachers should be well informed so that they understand the different types of professional development. Ms. Overton developed a handbook for the teachers in the Mahan School District to help them guide them through professional development. She also created a bookmark for teachers with the names of different types of professional development activities. Ms. Overton’s interest in professional development seemed to go beyond the work day and her job.

Professional Development in the Mahan School District

Professional development in the Mahan School District is administered by the Coordinator of Professional Learning. The Mahan School District has a Professional Learning Advisory Committee (PLAC) which is comprised of directors, assistant superintendents, coordinators, and principals. Each year the committee meets to determine the professional development needs of the district. Once the needs are determined, Ms. Overton prepares to implement the courses that are needed. Some of the professional development courses are taught by the Mahan School District staff, and some are conducted by consultants or other outside personnel or agencies. Teachers may participate in professional development outside of the district's offerings, but they must first receive prior approval through the district professional learning office.

After the end of each school year, Ms. Overton submits the district's Professional Learning Comprehensive Plan to the state, which reports about professional learning activities, participation, and expenditures for the district. The activities included in the report are the activities which were approved by the PLAC committee for that school year. Ms Overton described the benefits and accomplishments of the professional learning program for her school district. The report submitted in August 2005 included the following about Professional learning in the Mahan School District:

- Provides professional learning experiences aligned with National Staff Development Standards
- Supports district goals for student performance
- Provides learning opportunities that show a direct link between professional learning and an observable impact in the classroom which translates into measurable improved student learning and performance.
- Supports the district goal to ensure high levels of learning that improves the performance of all educators and the learning of all students.

According to the report submitted in August 2005, the Mahan School district had 258 professional learning activities completed by employees. Total participation in professional learning activities in the Mahan School District was 5,262 certified staff and 432 leadership staff, 387 service staff, 942 paraprofessional staff, 1500 non-certified staff, and 20 school board members. The staff participation number reflects all staff including any who may have participated in more than one activity. Therefore, the number is more than the actual number of employees in the district. The total number of Professional Learning Units (PLU) credits earned was 8,543. Total expenditures for professional learning in the Mahan School District were \$1,078,301.60. This figure reflects costs for professional learning which may include expenditures for district professional development courses as well as travel and costs associated with activities outside of the district. The Mahan School District data submitted to the state in August 2005 is displayed in Table 4.12 in comparison with the data submitted by the Delmas School District.

The Mahan School District adopted a board policy for professional development opportunities. The policy mandates a professional learning program that address the needs of students and staff and that includes critical attributes of professional learning. The policy calls for planning at the district, school, and individual levels. It calls for an integrated approach to include all departments and schools. In addition, the policy mandates that all certificated staff complete a minimum of 24 hours of professional learning each year. Ms. Overton said that the requirement for the number of hours will be changed to 21 hours for the 2006-2007 school year.

The Mahan School District Professional Learning Advisory Committee approves and establishes the professional learning guidelines to implement the mandates of the board policy.

The guidelines are posted on the district web site and are in the district Professional Learning Handbook. The 2005-2006 the Mahan School District guidelines state the following:

All certified personnel are required to complete twenty-four (24) hours of professional learning. Specified in-service days will be designated for obtaining these required professional learning hours.

There are three (3) required in-service days built into the 2005-2006 school calendar designated specifically for professional learning.

Certified personnel are required to attend all three (3) designated in-service days. Each day is a full eight hour paid contractual work day.

Attendance for each of these in-service days is required and will be documented by system sign-in sheets and completion forms. No leave will be granted for these in-service days except for sick leave, which must be documented by a medical doctor.

Completion of alternative professional learning activities will be required for certified personnel who do not complete the hours for the designated in-service days. Certified personnel can obtain the hours not earned on the designated in-service days by completing content specific courses offered by the Mahan School District and other prior approved outside agencies.

Ms. Overton produced a Professional Learning Handbook for employees which not only includes the guidelines but also informs the employees of the district beliefs and goals. The handbook explains how an employee should go about applying for courses and obtaining prior approval. The handbook also gives employees the names and locations of district personnel they may need to contact concerning professional learning.

The Mahan School District offers professional learning courses in many academic content areas. The course descriptions and registration are posted online through a secure web site. Many of the professional learning courses offered were only offered at a particular school to meet the needs of the staff in that school. These classes are listed as being “site based.” The name of the school is listed with the course. In addition, numerous courses were offered to train teachers in the new state performance standards for students. The district follows the state mandated timeline and courses offerings for these trainings. The Mahan School District offers

professional development classes in various academic content areas, classroom management, instructional strategies, leadership development, and communications.

Comparative Summary of the Delmas and the Mahan School Districts

The Communities

Delmas County was located in the middle of the state and is primarily urban, although there are still a few agricultural and rural areas scattered out in the county. There was one large urban area in Delmas County. Mahan County was also located in the middle of the state, but it consisted of two urban areas and more agricultural and rural areas in the county. Table 4.5 compares some of the census data from the two communities.

Table 4.5: *Comparison of Census Data for Delmas and Mahan Counties*

Census	Delmas	Mahan
2000 Population	153,887	110,765
Percentage Increase in Population from 1999 to 2000	2.5%	19.5%
2004 Population Estimate	155,170	123,753
2000 Per Capita Income	\$29,405	\$26,379
2000 Population Percentages:		
African American	47%	24.5%
White	50%	70.5%
Other	3%	5%
2000 Food Stamp Households	11,377	4,579
2000 Percentage of population 25 years or older with high school diploma or higher	77%	84%
2000 Percentage of Households Below the Poverty Level	19%	10%

The School Districts

Although Delmas County is larger in population than Mahan County, the two school districts were very close to the same size. In Table 4.6, a comparison of data from the two school districts is listed.

Table 4.6: *Comparison of 2004-2005 Data for the Delmas and Mahan School Districts*

	The Delmas School District	The Mahan School District
Schools 2004-2005:		
Elementary	27	21
Middle	7	7
High Schools	5	4
Total Student Enrollment 2004-2005	24,583	23,088
Student Subgroups 2004-2005:		
• African American	72%	34%
• White	24%	59%
• Other	4%	7%
Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Meals	68%	41%
CRCT 4 th grade Student Test Scores: Percentage Passing		
• Reading	81%	90%
• English/language arts	78%	87%
• Math	68%	80%
• Social Studies	81%	92%
• Science	80%	92%
GHS GT Student Test Scores: Percentage passing		
• English/ language arts	94%	94%
• Math	89%	93%
• Social Studies	76%	85%
• Science	54%	73%
• Writing	85%	92%
Graduation Rate 2004-2005	58.8%	77.5%

Other student data indicates that in 2004-2005 the Delmas School District had 664 students take the SAT test with an average composite score of 901. The Mahan School District had 807 students take the SAT test with a composite score of 989.

Both districts were close in size and employed close to the same number of educators.

Tables 4.7 and 4.8 give a comparison of the two district's employees.

Table 4.7: *Comparison of PreK-12 Teachers for Delmas and Mahan School Districts 2004-2005*

	The Delmas School District	The Mahan School District
Full time pre-K – 12 teachers	1542	1609
Part time pre-K – 12 teachers	86	33
Pre-K – 12 teachers with Bachelors 4 yr Degree	779	716
Pre-K – 12 teachers with Masters 5 yr Degree	701	640
Pre-K – 12 teachers with Specialist 6 yr Degree	135	275
Pre-K – 12 teachers with Doctoral 7 yr Degree	11	8
Years of Teaching Experience: Pre-K-12 Teachers		
• Less than 1 year	141	88
• 1 – 10 years	588	802
• 11 – 20 years	449	433
• 21 – 30 years	332	267
• More than 30 years	118	52
• Average years of experience	13.96	11.81

Table 4.8: *Comparison of Administrators for Delmas and Mahan School Districts 2004-2005*

	The Delmas School District	The Mahan School District
Full time Administrators	102	124
Part time Administrators	7	15
Administrators: Highest Degree		
Administrators with Bachelors 4 yr Degree	0	6
Administrators with Masters 5 yr Degree	33	23
Administrators with Specialist 6 yr Degree	52	93
Administrators with Doctoral 7 yr Degree	24	17
Years of Experience in Education: Administrators		
• Less than 1 year	0	0
• 1 – 10 years	10	21
• 11 – 20 years	29	54
• 21 – 30 years	56	49
• More than 30 years	14	15
• Average years of experience	22.78	19.92

The Participants

Both Dr. Lilith Duke and Ms. Ann Overton were the district administrators for professional development in their school districts. The two participants had many characteristics in common. Both strongly believed that professional development for teachers was very important to effective teaching and to student achievement. Both were active members of both state and national professional development organizations. They both also expressed an enjoyment of reading and learning new concepts and strategies for professional development.

One of the differences between the two participants was the number of years in education and the number of years as the central office administrator for professional development for their district. Dr. Duke in the Delmas School District had been in education for 29 years, and she had been the director of Professional Learning for 7 years. Ms Overton in the Mahan School District had been in education for 15 years, and she had been the central office administrator for professional learning for 2 years. Both worked in the office of professional learning in their districts before they became the administrators. Dr. Duke had more experience as a classroom teacher than Ms. Overton. However, Ms. Overton had experience in providing and teaching professional development classes to teachers in several school districts through her previous job with a State Regional Service Agency (RESA). Table 4.9 provides a comparison of education and experience of the two participants.

Table 4.9: *Comparison of Education and Experience of the Two Participants*

	Dr. Lilith Duke	Ann Overton
District	The Delmas School District	The Mahan School District
Years in Education	29	15
Years in Present Position	7	2

Table 4.9 *continued*

Advanced Education Degrees	Masters in Science Education Specialist in Educational Leadership Doctorate in Educational Leadership	Masters in Middle Grades Education and Counseling Specialist in Educational Leadership
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Both participants believed that their jobs were an important aspect of their school districts.

During the two interviews, Dr. Duke talked frequently about her beliefs and the beliefs of the Delmas School District relative to professional development, veteran teachers, and the No Child Left Behind Act. Although Ms. Overton expressed her beliefs and those of the Mahan School District, she talked mostly about the standards and policies for professional development relative to veteran teachers and the No Child Left Behind Act.

Both participants provided the researcher with a copy of the job descriptions for the position they held in their respective school districts. Table 4.10 gives a comparative look at the similarities in the two job descriptions.

Table 4.10: *Similar Job Responsibilities: Central Office Administrators for Professional Development*

The Delmas School District	The Mahan School District
Job Goal: To administer a Staff Development Program that will enable staff personnel to improve their instructional and work capabilities.	The Coordinator of Professional Learning performs all duties and responsibilities regarding the functions for administering, coordinating, and directing the system professional learning program to increase school effectiveness
Reports to : Deputy Superintendent	Reports to: Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
In cooperation with other staff members designs Staff Development activities to enhance the instructional process.	Coordinates and implements the system professional learning program.

Table 4.10 *continued*

In cooperation with members of the administrative and instructional staff, develops and implements staff development programs.	Works with the system superintendent, assistant superintendents, directors, coordinators, principals, teachers, and others to plan the system professional learning program.
Designs, organizes and coordinates workshops and courses for Delmas School District personnel	Coordinates scheduling of professional learning programs, courses, and learning opportunities that support the system professional learning program.
Performs other related tasks as assigned by the Deputy Superintendent.	Performs other duties as requested by the Superintendent of Schools, Assistant Superintendents for Human Resources or Teaching and Learning.
Implements Staff Development Programs as outlined by the Quality Basic Education Act of Georgia.	Ensures all aspects of the professional learning program operate within applicable state and federal guidelines

Below are more responsibilities in the job description for Dr. Duke in the Delmas School

District:

- Designs and organizes workshops for support staff personnel
- Develops a brochure annually which lists the Staff Development activities
- Conducts a survey of the school system to ascertain Staff Development needs

Other responsibilities in the job descriptions for Ms. Overton in the Mahan School District

include the following:

- Organizes the system Professional Learning Advisory Committee to advise and assist the system coordinator in the assessment of professional learning needs, determination of priorities, content and quality of activities, evaluation of the program and modification of the professional learning portion of the system's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan.
- Works with the system superintendent and other administrators in processing requests for professional leave.
- Identifies resources and materials to implement and support the system professional learning program.

- Attends conferences and meetings which provide information on guidelines, research, or practices in professional learning.
- Maintains all records related to professional learning activities.
- Assumes responsibility for the professional learning budget.
- Works with outside agencies to coordinate learning opportunities and programs to support the system professional learning program.
- Works with colleges in the development of graduate programs specific to system needs.

Although the job descriptions varied, the participants both were responsible for overseeing the professional development programs in their districts.

Professional Development

Professional Development in both the Delmas School District and the Mahan School District was offered year round. In both districts, professional development courses were offered after work hours and in the summer. In addition, both districts offered state mandated instruction for teachers in the new performance standards at various times during the year. Some instructional sessions were during the school day and substitutes were employed for the teachers who were out of their classes for the trainings. However, both districts were moving toward using teacher workdays to deliver as many of the state trainings as possible so that teachers did not have to be away from their classroom.

Both the Delmas School District and the Mahan School District offered courses taught within their districts. Table 4.11 below lists some examples of the courses with the same or similar titles for each district.

Table 4.11: *Examples of Professional Development Courses*

Topics	The Delmas School District	The Mahan School District
Science	Science Endorsement	Science Standards
Middle Grades	Middle Grades Writing	Fostering Writing Competencies in Middle Grades Learner
Math	Calendar Math	Calendar Math
Classroom Management	Managing Classroom Behavior	Classroom Management
Book Studies	Framework for Understanding Poverty	Framework for Understanding Poverty

Both districts offer professional development courses which are either mandated by the state or are related to the district's school improvement plan.

Although both districts offer many professional development courses, the requirements and procedures for providing the professional development to teachers is somewhat different. In the Delmas School District, teachers are required to complete Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) which includes professional development classes they must take over the course of two or three years. There is no board policy mandating the procedures. Teachers, however, are required to participate and their annual evaluation includes an evaluation of their Individual Learning Plan progress. Conversely, the Mahan School District does have a board policy that specifically mandates that all teachers complete 24 hours of professional development each year. Further explanation of each district's procedures for providing professional is given in the respective chapters on the findings for each district.

Both school districts submitted a Comprehensive Professional Learning Program Report to the state in August 2005. The report is a summary of the number of professional learning opportunities offered in the previous school year and the number of participants. The reports were described separately for each district. Table 4.12 shows a comparison between the two school districts of the data provided within these reports.

Table 4.12: *Comprehensive Professional Learning Program Reports: August 2005*

Data Requested	Data Reported The Delmas School District	Data Reported The Mahan School District
Number of Professional Learning Activities in Comprehensive Professional Learning Program	299	258
Number of Participants in Comprehensive Professional Learning Program:		
• Teachers	1,820	1,754
• Leadership	90	144
• Service	0	129
Expenditures:		
State funds expended	\$412,757	\$394,638.35
Stipends (from state allocations)	0	\$20,700.00
Federal funds expended	\$2,496,676	\$662,963.29
Local funds expended	\$308,402	0
TOTAL Expenditures	\$3,217,835.00	\$1,078,301.60
Number of Participants in Courses for PLU Credit	*4,029	*8,543

** Reflects participation for more than one course for many participants.*

Neither the Delmas nor the Mahan School Districts listed any funding for professional learning from business partnerships. A narrative evaluation of professional learning was required to be submitted with the report to the state. For the evaluation, the Mahan School District entered a paragraph describing the goals of the district in providing professional learning. The Delmas School District submitted a separate two and a half page document giving summaries of nine different initiatives and programs that were offered to support professional learning. These were listed earlier in this chapter. The substance of each of these narrative evaluations is included in the discussion of professional development for each school district presented earlier in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DELMAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

This chapter reports the findings of the case study of the first participant, Dr. Lilith Duke, in the Delmas School District. After the two interviews were conducted, the data were categorized and coded. Patterns were noted across the responses to the interview questions asked of Dr. Duke. The interview questions were developed to uncover the perspectives of Dr. Duke, and these interview questions were asked as a means to answer the overall research questions. During the course of the two interviews with Dr. Lilith Duke, 12 major categories emerged. Table 5.1 presents the emergent categories in relation to each of the three overall research questions that guided the present study.

Table 5.1: *Research Questions and Emergent Categories*

Research Questions	Emergent Categories
What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on the process of developing and implementing the policies and procedures adopted by their school districts to provide ongoing professional learning activities that provide support for veteran teachers to be highly qualified?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beliefs about Educating Children• Changes for Veteran Teachers and the District• Improving Teacher Effectiveness• Challenges of Implementation of Professional Development
What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on providing veteran teachers with professional development activities which are aligned with the school district's comprehensive improvement plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Professional Development• Individual Learning Plans• New Learning: the Willing Learner• Challenges for Veteran Teachers• Challenges in Developing the School Improvement Plan
What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on implementing changes for veteran teachers in professional development activities as a result of The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changing Teacher Practices• Effect of Changes in Professional Development on Veteran Teachers• Resistance to Change

The categories emerged as Dr. Duke shared her perspectives and through the examination of artifacts gathered from the Delmas School District. The emergent categories related to the research questions are discussed in the sections that follow.

Policies and Procedures Supporting the Professional Development

The first overall research question sought to gain the perspectives of central office professional development administrators regarding the policies and procedures about the ongoing professional development provided to veteran teachers and highly qualified. Throughout the interview with Dr. Duke, four emergent categories emerged from the content of the interviews and the artifacts examined. These categories included:

- Beliefs about Educating Children
- Changes for Veteran Teachers and the District
- Improving Teacher Effectiveness
- Challenges of Implementation of Professional Development

Although in the Delmas School District there are no formal policies related to professional development and highly qualified, there are many procedures and processes related to professional development. These procedures and processes have evolved over time through the work that Dr. Duke and other administrators have done. The following section talks about many procedures and processes in place in the Delmas School District and provides a discussion of the content of the interviews and artifacts related to each of the four emergent categories.

Beliefs about Educating Children

Beliefs about children and how they learn emerged as an emergent category in the overall philosophy for both Dr. Duke personally and the Delmas School District in relation to providing professional development for teachers. Beliefs emerged early in the interviews in response to the question, “What does No Child Left Behind mean to you relative to highly qualified?” Dr. Duke answered without hesitation that “personally it means to me that it’s an explicit belief on the part

of individuals who developed that law that all children can learn.” She continued to expound on the importance of the belief that “all children can learn” and that the No Child Left Behind Act was asking everyone to “share that belief.”

Dr. Duke explained that the Delmas School District has many children who enter pre-kindergarten and kindergarten without a sufficient foundation for learning. Many of the children come to school deficient in the basic foundation needed for learning because they come from homes in which “there is little or no support for education.” Dr. Duke forcefully asserted that in the Delmas School District, all teachers and administrators needed to “share the belief that no child should be left behind.” She emphasized that everyone in the Delmas School District has to believe that “all have the capacity to learn.” According to Dr. Duke, the No Child Left Behind Act means a national “desire” that all children can learn. In speaking about the No Child Left Behind Act and the belief that all children can learn, Dr. Duke said, “The law to me is the national statement that sets a real interesting precedent for us in our nation to have that as a desire across the nation.”

Dr. Duke believed that the No Child Left Behind Law set a national standard with requirements and mandates that would “need monitoring and possibly have sanctions for non-compliance.” She stated, “It is difficult to set standards at the school district level and much more difficult to set standards at the national level.” She further pointed out:

At the district level, requirements for teachers set forth by the central office must be paired with procedures and plans for monitoring both progress and compliance. Monitoring and following up on compliance requires enough money and staff to adequately do the job.

Dr. Duke asserted that the federal government would not only have to monitor progress towards the goal of all children learning but would also have to sanction states and districts not in compliance with the mandates. She explained: “Really, the only way that you can have

something that enables that belief is to follow it through with the requirements that they set for teachers and administrators.”

Changes for Veteran Teachers and the District

The No Child Left Behind Act meant a great deal of change for the Delmas School District, and Dr. Duke expressed that “with change there comes controversy and frustration.” As Dr. Duke began to discuss the changes, she drew a deep breath and then launched into an explanation of how the district began approaching the changes that No Child Left Behind would bring. As the administrators at central office in the Delmas School District began to learn about the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, they began discussing the “implications of the new law” and they began making plans. The administrators focused on how they would implement changes in the district so that teachers could meet the requirement to be highly qualified. Their plan was to first inform all teachers and school level administrators of the new requirements and then “to provide support and plans for each teacher and administrator to become highly qualified.” The Delmas School District administrators began implementing their plan “quickly so that we could give ample time for everyone to meet the requirements.” The plan included meetings held by central office administrators with all teachers in each school. The administrators provided “detailed information about the changes and requirements as well as information about what the teachers would need to do to meet the requirements.” In addition, Dr. Duke reflected that the Delmas School District “provided ample time for teachers to meet the requirements and additional support for those who needed it.” Because of this approach, Dr. Duke believed, “We didn’t see as much frustration or consternation on the part of our teachers.” She described the approach in the following manner:

We actually went around to every school and did presentations about the No Child Left Behind Law and gave explicit information; and then did that repeatedly at different

principals' meetings so that the principals understood what it meant; and I tell principals now that I think that they have a total grasp of what No Child Left Behind means as far as highly qualified and have met the requirements.

The "initial focus in the Delmas" targeted the changes that required teachers to hold a certificate that qualified them to teach in the content area. However, "there was frustration." To support teachers who had to add content fields, the Delmas School District not only reimbursed teachers who wanted to take the fundamentals test but also helped prepare them for the test through informational meetings about the tests.

In the present study, a veteran teacher was defined as a teacher who is state certified and has been teaching five or more years. Dr. Duke and other administrators met with veteran teachers at each school in 2002. The purpose of their meetings was three-fold. First, they informed teachers about the changes brought on by NCLB. Next, they trained teachers in how to use the web site for the Georgia Professional Standards Commission to find information about their certification. Last, they instructed teachers to obtain copies of their certificates from the web site and give a copy to their principals. The purpose of the meetings was to assure that all teachers learned "exactly what they were certified to teach and to see what their certificate said about their concentrations (content areas)." The following are Dr. Duke's comments about the teachers' understanding of their certifications:

A lot of teachers interestingly enough didn't know. They knew that they had a degree in Early Childhood or in Middle Grades or whatever, but, as far as their concentrations or content areas, they weren't always aware of what that certificate said.

As Dr. Duke told about this process, she stated that for the teachers this was the beginning of an "awareness of what they were actually qualified to teach at that point."

According to Dr. Duke, changes brought about by NCLB impacted some groups of veteran teachers in the Delmas School District more than others. Special education teachers and

elementary teachers who had middle grades certification were more affected because of the need for many of them to add certification fields to their certificates. She explained that under NCLB the teachers must have a certification field for every academic content area they teach.

According to Dr. Duke, the most frustrated group of teachers in the Delmas School District were the special education teachers because “in Georgia, the information about what the special education teachers are going to have to meet the content requirements did not come about as early as it did for the regular ed teachers.” Special education teachers had never had to have academic content areas on their certificates, but now under NCLB, they must have those areas for any child for whom they are the teacher of record for a particular academic area.

For the other group of veteran teachers, elementary school teachers who were middle grades certified and were in self-contained classrooms in the fourth and fifth grades, the changes were “very difficult.” Dr. Duke expressed with concern, “That was going to be a very difficult thing for us, especially for teachers that had middle grades certification because that meant they had to be concentrated in everything, all the core contents.” Dr. Duke believed that starting early, immediately after the No Child Left Behind Act became public, gave the Delmas School District time to help these teachers through “professional development” and “other avenues to add these academic content areas.” She stated that if they had not had sufficient time, she believed “the decision in the Delmas School District would have been to change the way instruction was delivered and to departmentalize” the elementary classes at the 4th and 5th grade levels so that teachers could teach in the fields listed on their middle grades certificates. Dr. Duke pointed out that this would not have been consistent with the belief held by the district leaders about “how children learn.” Dr. Duke explained further:

We talked about our belief about the best ways that children learn, and if your belief is that they have learned best in the self-contained environment, then you need to prepare for that teacher to have those concentrations.

The solution to the problem of having these veteran teachers certified in all content areas was two-fold. Teachers would either take the state test in the content area or participate in state approved professional development classes.

Professional development for the veteran teachers was implemented by the Delmas School District to help teachers become qualified allowing the elementary classes to remain self-contained. Veteran teachers were given the choice of taking the PRAXIS⁴ test in the content areas they needed or taking professional development classes that were provided by the Delmas School District. The teachers who had middle grades certificates needed to have all five core content areas to be highly qualified to teach grades four or five in self-contained classrooms. Those core content areas were math, English/language arts, science, social science, and reading. Through the professional development department, the Delmas School District developed their own endorsement classes in math and science so that the veteran teachers could begin to take the classes and earn the content concentrations they needed. As Dr. Duke talked about this process, she smiled and seemed very pleased with the accomplishments. She expressed the following thoughts:

I think we have probably enabled a lot of teachers to stay in a self-contained environment because many of them already have the language arts and social studies because of the coursework that they took in college. So the reason we chose math and science was because those were two areas that we knew a lot of teachers did not have the foundation or the ability to get the concentration in and a lot of them did not want to take the Praxis.

Although some teachers chose to take the PRAXIS test, many veteran teachers preferred to take the professional development classes. Dr. Duke continued to say that some veteran teachers were

⁴ The Educational Testing Service (ETS) provides tests called The Praxis Series that the state of Georgia uses as part of their teaching certification process. The tests measure content knowledge and teaching skills.

“nervous about having to take a test on something they did not feel comfortable about.” The endorsement classes gave them another option for fulfilling the requirements to be highly qualified.

Although the Delmas School District implemented plans for assisting teachers to become highly qualified, the district board of education did not adopt any formal policies or procedures. Dr. Duke explained that principals understood the No Child Left Behind mandate for all teachers to be highly qualified. She said that they were “very cognizant and knew that this was a mandate that they must meet. So there hasn’t been any resistance to it at all.” Each principal has a plan for their school for compliance with the federal mandate. “All of them have a plan at the school level, that’s what we want,” according to Dr. Duke. She reported that the Delmas School District will develop a formal local policy “at some point, but we do not want to be that restrictive because everyone has cooperated.”

Improving Teacher Effectiveness

Relative to the district’s plan for providing professional development as mandated under the No Child Left Behind Act, Dr. Duke described the district’s initiatives for professional development. Under The No Child Left Behind Act, professional development must be ongoing and not “one shot workshops.” In response to the question of whether the school district had developed any new procedures or policies in the area of professional learning to comply with this provision, Dr. Duke responded with confidence that the Delmas School District had “not developed any procedures or policies.” She further explained:

We have the great fortune of having a superintendent whose vision is around improving student achievement by improving teacher effectiveness, and the superintendent is a major proponent of professional development and understands that you don’t change teacher behavior practice with a one shot event. So we have, I would say, about four initiatives in the system for professional development that all involve improving teacher effectiveness and have for some years.

Dr. Duke explained that the district has major initiatives for professional development that have been in place for several years prior to No Child Left Behind. Two of the major initiatives are the literacy initiative and the assessment for learning initiative. In addition, there is a math initiative. For instance, there is a plan for the literacy initiative and it is broken down into K-3 literacy, 4-5 literacy, 6-8 literacy, and 9-12 literacy.

The central office administrators developed a plan to work with teachers to enhance instructional effectiveness through the initiatives which are part of professional development each year. Each year as teachers participate in the initiatives, the district has an informational meeting with teachers about each initiative and the plan for that year. The meeting is what Dr. Duke called “a first event” which is held at the beginning of the new year school year. For all of the initiatives, the district follows through with plans for monitoring to ensure the implementation. Through the professional development office, an implementation plan was written for each of the initiatives in the system. The implementation plan serves as a rubric that principals use in their walk-throughs of classrooms, and principals are able to go into the classroom and observe the teacher’s actual implementation of the instructional strategies learned through the presentation of the initiative. Dr. Duke shared the following about the use of the implementation plans:

So, it’s no longer I went and got and I decided whether I was going to do this in my classroom, because now I go, I learn, I use, I come back, I share how I use, and then my principals are also investigating where I am in the implementation through that rubric.

At the end of the training sessions, all the teachers receive the implementation plan. The teachers understand that their principals will be monitoring them and visiting their classrooms, looking for the elements on their implementation plan.

Copies of Implementation Plans were obtained and reviewed by the researcher. Dr. Duke explained the plan again as she was printing out copies. For example, the Implementation Plan for Improving Literacy for Grades K-3 contained the following elements:

- Description of the Literacy Plan: summarizes the goals and expected implementation strategies, and gives a brief definition of Literacy.
- Expected Student Results with Compelling or Strong Levels of Implementation: lists five expected student results
- Grid listing the Visible Elements of Improving Literacy that would constitute a either a Compelling Case for Implementation, or a Strong Case for Implementation, or a Limited Case for Implementation.

The rubric which the principals use includes the following definitions for the three levels of implementation:

- Compelling Implementation: Implementation is beyond expectation. Teachers can deliver information to others who are at the limited level of implementation.
- Strong Implementation: Implementation is at an acceptable level.
- Limited Implementation: Not an acceptable level of implementation. Teacher needs additional training or information

Visible Elements of Improving Literacy for Grades K-2 includes indicators for Phonemic Awareness for grades K-1, Phonics/Decoding for grades K-3, comprehension for grades K-3, vocabulary for grades 1-3, and fluency for grades 1-3. The Visible Elements also includes that the “Teacher incorporates three or more informal assessments into daily instruction.” Five informal assessments are given. Finally, Visible Elements include that the teacher uses two or more of the instructional strategies that are listed in the Implementation Plan.

Challenges of Implementation of Professional Development

Relative to the challenges that Dr. Duke encountered in the implementation of professional development as mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act, she spoke about communication and misinformation. As Dr. Duke described the challenges that she encountered, she used the terms “frustration” and “worry” to describe how she felt during that time. One of the challenges was “being certain” that the information she was giving teachers about the changes was “accurate.” Initially, when the No Child Left Behind Act became law, she believed that she knew enough “to communicate the requirements of the law to teachers,” but as the regulations and guidance for the new law unfolded, the information she had received initially would sometimes change. She would have to go back to teachers and say, “Well, that’s not exactly the way it’s happening anymore.” As Dr. Duke expressed the fact that “It was very, very frustrating,” her demeanor confirmed her words.

States were required to formulate implementation plans for meeting the requirements of No Child Left Behind, and the state plans had to be approved by the federal government. As Georgia developed and implemented the state plans, state regulations were sent to local school districts. In this process, state officials met with federal government officials to get approval of the state regulations and procedures for implementation of the mandates of No Child Left Behind. Georgia’s regulations would sometimes change as a result of these meetings with federal government officials. As changes had to be made at the state level, the state would notify local districts. Dr. Duke explained that one of the areas that changed significantly was the field of special education. “It went from one thing to another to totally completely different.” A “major challenge” for Dr. Duke was keeping up with these changes. One of the ways Dr. Duke kept up with changes was through meetings held by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, the

state agency responsible for teacher certification rules. In addition, the state hired Title IIA consultants to help implement compliance with No Child Left Behind. These consultants were assigned groups of districts across the state providing each local district a consultant to contact for information. “So, that’s been my major challenge, just keeping up with it and knowing it well enough that I’m advising people correctly about what to do regarding the needs that they have to be certified and highly qualified.”

Dr. Duke talked about her own feelings about the changes that took place. She said that she “resisted” when the name “staff development” was changed to “professional development” and “staff development units” became “professional learning units.” She thought that it was “just another name change” and it did not really “signify a change in the actual definition and meaning of staff development.” Now, however, she believes that “all of it, even the name, was involved in all the changes that we were undergoing.” Dr. Duke pointed out that there are a lot of “professional development people” who are still very “traditional in their approach,” but she believes that “more and more we are moving toward meeting the standards of the national model of professional development.”

Professional Development and the District Improvement Plan

The second overall research question sought to gain the perspectives of central office administrators regarding providing veteran teachers with professional development aligned with the district’s comprehensive improvement plan. Five categories emerged from the content of the interviews with Dr. Duke and the artifacts. These emergent categories include:

- New Professional Development
- Individual Learning Plans
- New Learning: the Willing Learner
- Challenges for Veteran Teachers
- Challenges in Developing the School Improvement Plan

Dr. Duke's perspectives on providing professional development activities which were aligned with the school improvement plan as well as the artifacts that were collected are discussed in the following sections of emerging categories.

New Professional Development

Professional development played a key role in providing support for veteran teachers to become highly qualified in the Delmas School District. Prior to the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act, the administration of the Delmas School District had begun to "consider ways" to change and to improve professional development for teachers according to Dr. Duke. When the No Child Left Behind Act became law, central office administrators were ready to move forward with implementing the mandates of the NCLB law. The central office administrators in the Delmas School District immediately began to hold meetings and to inform teachers, principals, and other certified staff about the new law and the changes that would be faced to comply with the law.

Dr. Duke felt that the Delmas School District was "very fortunate" that they had already begun changing professional development prior to NCLB. According to Dr. Duke, although the Delmas School District was not "ahead of the game" in getting teachers highly qualified, the Delmas School District was "right on the beginning of the No Child process." As Dr. Duke began to recall the process of changing professional development, she talked with a positive tone and exhibited a demeanor of confidence. She noted that a few years ago professional development was referred to as staff development. Dr. Duke explained:

Our superintendent, shortly after coming to Delmas prior to No Child Left Behind, began to ask about the type of staff development that we were using in the system and began to challenge me to look beyond the workshop and even into different types of models of staff development. So at that point, I began to do a lot of investigating into the different ways that you could deliver information to teachers.

Early in the process, Dr. Duke pursued several avenues as she gathered information on professional development. She read many books, journals, and reports about the “different models of professional development and ways to deliver information to teachers.” She also attended national conferences on professional development. “The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) conferences are wonderful,” she said. The NSCD not only provides conferences for professional development for educators, but also provides publications and programs for professional development. In addition, Dr. Duke talked with consultants and peers in other school districts in Georgia. As she researched professional development, she began to share her knowledge with principals in the Delmas School District. As a result of her research and meetings with principals and central office administrators, professional development began to change in the Delmas School District.

One of the changes that arose out of investigating the different ways to deliver professional development to teachers was to implement more school-based professional development. Prior to these changes, teachers usually received professional development by individually registering and participating in school district professional development workshops. School-based professional development meant that groups of teachers from a particular school would all be participating in the same activities. School-based professional development also allowed each school to participate in activities that were directly related to the needs of their staff and students. In addition, it created an opportunity for team work within the school and for professional development to be more tailored to the school’s common visions and goals. Teachers became more involved in the professional development process. Dr. Duke believed that this was a good change for the Delmas School District.

As part of the implementation of school-based professional development, Dr. Duke explained that meetings were held to present to teachers new methods of providing professional development which were different from the activities in which they had participated in the past. Teachers learned “how to go about doing actual research and learn about different methods of conducting professional development. Principals were involved and could monitor follow-ups in their buildings.” The Delmas School District administrators decided to begin school-based professional development with book studies on topics which were aligned with the system initiatives. Every one in the school participated. Dr. Duke shared, “Many of our schools are experts now at doing those kinds of things and getting a lot of results from doing book studies.” According to Dr. Duke, central office administrators ensured “through consultation with the principals and through school visits” that there was follow-up at each school throughout the year and that there was a plan for monitoring every type of professional development provided in the individual schools and in the district. Each school provided documentation of the professional development and monitoring to the Director of Professional Learning.

Individual Learning Plans

As part of changing and improving professional development in the Delmas School District, the administrators implemented a new professional development plan for teachers. The implementation of the new plan began prior to the No Child Left Behind Act. Initially, the Delmas School District administrators called the plan “Highly Qualified Plan,” but after the No Child Left Behind Act became public law, the name of the plan was changed to the “Individual Learning Plan” so that there would be no confusion with the actual NCLB law and mandates.

The individual learning plan provides each teacher with a specific plan for professional development that the teacher completes over a span of two or three years. The plan includes

professional development activities related to the teacher's content field and grade level. The plan is mandatory for both veteran teachers as well as new teachers. The individual learning plan provides each teacher with a specific list of the professional development activities that they must complete. Principals must participate in the same activities as their teachers. According to Dr. Duke, "We require that they attend the same classes that the teachers attend, and so for instance, if a first grade teacher has on their plan to attend Balanced Literacy, the principal has it on his or her plan." It also includes specifics about the activity, such as the number of professional learning units they earned for the activity, when and where the activity will be held, and whether the activity is a local requirement or a state or federal requirement. The plans are individualized to the grade level and/or subject that a teacher is teaching. She further explained about the plans:

We cover all the areas. We let the directors for those areas decide on what the training needed to be, and, the one that we are using now, we are in our fourth year of implementation of that, and so we probably next year are going to add some new things to that plan.

The plans are sent to each principal for distribution at the school level. The teachers have two years to complete the activities on the plan. However, a one year extension is allowed. Dr. Duke said that many teachers have taken three years to complete the plan. Teachers turn their completed plans into their principals. In speaking of the participation by school principals and assistant principals, Dr. Duke said, "It just makes a big difference. So again, our superintendent is a great proponent of everybody in the school knowing what everybody is doing as far as No Child Left Behind." The professional development activities and requirements on the individual learning plan have not changed in the past three years. However, Dr. Duke said, "There will be some changes and additions for the next school year to provide new professional development aligned with ongoing curriculum changes in the state and at the district level."

The individual learning plans cover all grade levels and all content areas. There is also a plan for all administrators and for support personnel such as media specialists, gifted teachers, speech/language pathologists, etc. Artifacts collected from the Delmas School District included sample copies of individual learning plans. Each individual learning plan includes the titles of the courses to be taken by the teacher or support personnel, the number of hours required, the number of credits awarded, and the designation of the requirement as a local requirement, a requirement of the Georgia Department of Education, or a federal government requirement. Columns are provided for marking the date completed, the instructor, and the location. An example of an Individual Learning Plan for a Sixth Grade Teacher is presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: *Individual Learning Plan for a Sixth Grade Teacher in the Delmas School District*

Class Title	# of Hours	SDU Credits Offered	Required By	Date Completed	Instructor	Location
Middle Grades Reading	20	2	Local			
Middle Grades Writing	20	2	Local			
Middle Grades Literacy	10	1	Local			
Framework for Understanding Poverty (Day 1& 2)	12	1	Local			
Analyzing Data	4	0	Local			
Character Education	5	0	Local			
Intech	50	0	DOE			
Math Concentration (for math teachers)	200	20	PSC			
Science Concentration (for science teachers)	200	20	PSC			
Orientation to New Textbook	10	1	Local			
Other Classes as Requested						

Upon completion of the plan, it must be signed by both the participant and the principal. The individual learning plan provided veteran teachers with ongoing professional development opportunities consistent with the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act.

The No Child Left Behind Act required that professional development be aligned with the school district's comprehensive improvement plan. For veteran teachers in the Delmas School District, this was a new concept that meant change. Relative to her perspective on providing veteran teachers with professional development aligned with the district's comprehensive improvement plan, Dr. Duke indicated three areas of interests. Identified as areas of interest were the challenges of new learning, the challenges for veteran teachers, and the challenges in developing the district improvement plan.

New Learning: The Willing Learner

Dr. Duke offered this thought about providing professional development to veteran teachers: "In our system, we have a model that's called a willing learner, and our expectation is that everybody be a willing learner." She further explained that the professional development now being offered in the Delmas School District is new, so that veteran teachers are learning something new, "not something they've learned before." Dr. Duke explained that most of what they are doing in the district is "new learning." Specifically in regard to veteran teachers, Dr.

Duke readily explained:

So, we don't do training just for new or brand new teachers to our system, but our training incorporates everybody, and I think if you can get a culture of that, you don't have veterans to say, "Well, I've been teaching for whatever number of years and I don't need to know that." It kind of goes back to that change; when you are in a great deal of change the communication that you need to incorporate as you move through the change process; the process is huge.

Dr. Duke said that "everyone needs to see the new way of learning." The Delmas School District administrators planned to help with the transition to new forms of professional development

through meetings with the teachers. They scheduled faculty meetings to communicate the changes to the teachers and to help the teachers understand the connection between the professional development activities and initiatives and what they were doing in their own classrooms. Dr. Duke emphasized again that these meetings were for both veteran and new teachers.

Challenges for Veteran Teachers

Dr. Duke spoke with concern about communicating to the teachers how the new professional development and the district improvement plans are related. She said that some teachers seemed to feel that it was just a “layered approach” because there were so many professional development initiatives. Dr. Duke emphasized that the faculty meetings the administrators held needed to help teachers understand “how things connect.” In the following passage, Dr. Duke speaks again about beliefs:

So, even veterans, who might have the information, need to see how some of these new initiatives connect to what they think or believe. We’re also trying to change beliefs. So, if you have a veteran teacher that has not embraced the fact that all children can learn, we’re trying to make in-roads there, too.

Dr. Duke indicated that as a willing learner “a teacher must believe that all children can learn and must be willing to put into practice effective instructional strategies that make a positive impact on student achievement.” The beliefs that all children can learn and that teacher effectiveness impacts student achievement were underlying themes throughout the discussion of professional development and highly qualified teachers. Dr. Duke not only expressed these beliefs in words, but also her very demeanor revealed this emphatic belief in these concepts. As she shared these beliefs, Dr. Duke sat up straight in her chair and slightly leaned forward, which gave emphasis to her words.

Challenges in Developing the School Improvement Plan

Under No Child Left Behind, school districts must have school improvement plans, and professional development must be aligned with the plan. Dr. Duke expressed the frustration she felt several years ago as the district began to develop a school improvement plan. She said the frustration was that “each department had their own plan and there was no coherence within the district.” For instance, there was a school improvement plan for Title I, a professional development plan, a system school improvement plan, a special education improvement plan, etc. It was clear from Dr. Duke’s expression that this was a big frustration. She shared her viewpoint with the following comments:

It was very frustrating because what would happen is, somebody would come to me and say ‘I’ve got this wonderful program for training teachers on literacy. That’s wonderful. Let’s buy that.’ Title I – somebody would go and say ‘I’ve got this great program for training teachers on literacy. Yeah, Let’s buy that,’ and we were just buying stuff and training teachers and nobody was fending off anybody that had a great idea. So, what was happening was we were just killing our teachers in terms of what we were asking them to do.

This situation began to turn around after the visit of a consultant who was speaking to the staff at schools on the topic, Success Indicators. The consultant was helping teachers and administrators look at student data and create data trends. Again, Dr. Duke gave the superintendent credit for bringing the consultant into the district. The central office administrators met and “began to ask, ‘What is our objective?’” As they pursued the answer, “things began to change and we began to align our goals and quit tripping over each other.” Speaking of the administrative team work that began to emerge, Dr. Duke said, “So, to me it’s been a godsend.” The administrators developed four strategic objectives targeting school improvement, employing and retaining teachers, culture and climate, and technology. After the district goals were set, the central office administrators met with school administrators and staff. Each school was asked to plan their goals and

objectives for supporting the district objectives. Dr. Duke summarized, “Now as a system we communicate and everybody knows what the goals are.”

Dr. Duke reiterated, “Professional development in the Delmas School District must align with the school improvement plan as well as the district improvement plan.” Dr. Duke reported that the superintendent was “very adamant about that.” The Delmas School District uses the “balanced scorecard approach.” The balanced scorecard concept is being used as a way to achieve the goals of school improvement. She expounded, “The approach requires setting goals and measuring results. As problems emerge, the balanced scorecard approach gives opportunity to identify and correct the problems.” Dr. Duke continued, “The central office administrators are in the process of rolling out this concept to the schools so that each school will have a school balanced score card.” All professional development must be aligned with the goals of the balanced scorecard, and Dr. Duke clarified, “There is no wiggle room in that!”

Implementing Changes for Veteran Teachers in Professional Development

The third overall research question sought to gain the perspectives of central office administrators regarding the implementation of changes for veteran teachers in professional development. Three categories emerged throughout the interviews with Dr. Duke. These categories include:

- Changing Teacher Practices
- Effect of Changes in Professional Development on Veteran Teachers
- Resistance to Change

Dr. Duke reflected on implementing changes in professional development for veteran teachers, and the categories that emerged are discussed in the sections that follow.

Changing Teacher Practices

Dr. Duke explained that changes in teacher practice had to take place as teachers learned new strategies for providing instructions through professional development. One of the challenges Dr. Duke faced in the Delmas School District was with veteran teachers who did not believe that “all children can learn.” Relative to what strategies she used to help veteran teachers with the changes in professional development, Dr. Duke expressed again her personal belief that all children can learn. She further said, “the No Child Left Behind Act means that there is a belief not only at the national level that all children can learn, but also at the district level.” In explaining the strategies she used, Dr. Duke talked about “change, beliefs, teacher effectiveness, and teacher practices.” Prior to the enactment of No Child Left Behind, Dr. Duke had attended a national staff development conference during which she was introduced to the concept that “to change teacher beliefs, one must first change teacher practice rather than trying to change the beliefs.” Dr. Duke further explained that she believes that as a central office administrator, “It is my responsibility to first change teacher practice through training, monitoring, and mandates, if necessary.” She asserted that teachers “will believe that students can learn when they see the results of changing their practice.” She emphasized that teachers must see the change for themselves as indicated by the following comments:

You don’t change people’s belief by just telling them to, you change them by them seeing for themselves that what they are doing is allowing all children to learn or giving them a better shot at it. So, we’re going from that standpoint. We are moving teachers, even veterans into some things and areas that they don’t necessarily believe in right now, but we’re changing the culture one teacher at a time.

Dr. Duke reiterated her belief that anytime “one talks about changing beliefs, one must talk about changing practice.”

Effect of Changes in Professional Development on Veteran Teachers

Some groups of teachers in the Delmas School District were more affected than others by the No Child Left Behind Act. Dr. Duke discussed middle grades teachers who were greatly affected by No Child Left Behind because they had to have a background in the specific content area they taught. The Delmas School District provided professional development to support veteran teachers seeking certification in fields in which they were not certified. Dr. Duke recounted, “The push back came when we started the Individual Learning Plan because veterans mainly did not like the idea that somebody was going to tell them what they had to take and whenever... .” For instance, according to Dr. Duke, in professional development classes that were given in a particular content area, the consultants teaching the classes would ask each participant, “Who are you? Where are you? Why are you here?” and the veteran teachers would say, “I’m here to get highly qualified.” Dr. Duke said, “They would go to the next one, and that teacher would say, ‘I’m here to get highly qualified.’” In the following statement, Dr. Duke explained that the frustration of veteran teachers was obvious because of the classes that they had to take:

So, they resisted that, but what we tried to do was to really ensure them that it was going to be quality stuff, that it wasn’t going to be wasting their time, and that if they ever went to a class they felt like was a waste of time to come and tell me, sit in this chair and say that was a waste of time. I have yet had one person to come to me and I read all the evaluations, so I think we are turning the tide in terms of veterans saying, ‘I’m not doing that’ to ‘Well, that really was pretty good stuff and I think I can see how it might help me.’

Dr. Duke believed that they had made great strides in convincing veteran teachers that they were not wasting their time in taking the professional development classes.

Resistance to Change

Relative to the challenges that Dr. Duke encountered in the implementation of professional development as mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act, she spoke about perceptions, beliefs, and the difficulties of working with veteran teachers. One challenge was working with people who had the perception that the requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act “would go away.” Dr. Duke said that “this was very difficult” because of the perception on the part of educators who held the beliefs, “I’ve been here, done that, and as soon as election is taking place then we won’t see any of this happen.” When Dr. Duke talked about these challenges, she called them “difficulties” as she related in the following:

So, it’s kind of that resistance because veterans, as I said, have seen things come and go and I guess some of them were thinking or hoping that this too shall pass. So, that’s certainly one of the difficulties is engaging them seriously to know that we are talking about August 31, 2006, we must be there. As of right now, this is not going away by August 31. So, I guess that would be one of the difficulties.

Dr. Duke believed that the basis of the resistance to the changes was rooted in the “beliefs” that the teachers held: “Teachers did not believe that the changes would last and not all teachers believed that all children can learn.” Dr. Duke elaborated on this point:

The teachers who were most resistant and for whom this was the biggest difficulty were the fourth and fifth grade teachers who held middle grades certification and who had to change or add to that certification. Even with professional development courses designed to help them earn certification, there was resistance.

The resistance to change was a major challenge for Dr. Duke, and she kept a serious expression on her face as she discussed the “difficulties.”

Federal Guidelines for Professional Development in the No Child Left Behind Act

As part of the interview process, Dr. Duke was given a set of key definitions for professional development from the federal No Child Left Behind Guidelines. Dr. Duke was asked if her school district provided the activities as indicated in the No Child Left Behind

Guidelines. If Dr. Duke indicated yes, she was asked to expound on these items. Table 5.3 contains the NCLB guidelines related to professional development.

Table 5.3: *Key Definitions for Professional Development from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Title IX, 9101(34)		
My school district provides professional development activities that:		
1	A(i)	improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified
2	(ii)	are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans;
3	(iii)	give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards;
4	(iv)	improve classroom management skills
5	(v)(I)	are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom; and
	(v)(II)	are not 1-day or short-term workshops or conferences;
6	(vi)	support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification;
7	(vii)	advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are—
7a	(vii)(I)	based on scientifically based research (except that this subclause shall not apply to activities carried out under part D of title II); and
7b	(vii)(II)	strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; and
8	(viii)	are aligned with and directly related to—
8a	(viii)(I)	State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments; and
8b	(viii)(II)	the curricula and programs tied to the standards described in subclause (I) except that this subclause shall not apply to activities described in clauses (ii) and (iii) of section 2123(3)(B);
9	(ix)	are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools to be served under this Act;

Table 5.3 *continued*

10	(x)	are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;
11	(xi)	to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and core academic subjects in which the teachers teach;
12	(xii)	as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;
13	(xiii)	provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs;
14	(xiv)	include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice; and
15	(xv)	include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents; and
	B	may include activities that—
16	(i)	involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish schoolbased teacher training programs that provide prospective teachers and beginning teachers with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers and college faculty;
17	(ii)	create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers; and
18	(iii)	provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in subparagraph (A) or another clause of this subparagraph that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom.

Although Dr. Duke responded to each of the definitions, she did not expound on each of the activities listed individually because she had talked about some of the activities in response to earlier interview questions. However, she did give further information on several of the topics, and this section presents the findings from the data gathered from Dr. Duke's responses.

1. Improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified. Dr. Duke explained that the Delmas School District does provide professional development activities that “improve and increase

teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enables teachers to become highly qualified." She indicated, "We probably do it better at some levels than at others." She went on to explain the elementary and middle grade levels have been provided with more professional development than the high school level. Dr. Duke said that at the high school level there are fewer professional development classes offered to teachers because there are so many different academic subject areas. However, some professional development activities offered in the Delmas School District are district-wide. For instance, the literacy initiative is provided at all levels. The Delmas School District also provides professional development activities that are an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans. At the middle grades level, classes for teachers to earn endorsement in certain content areas, such as reading endorsement, are offered.

3. Provides professional development activities that give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards. Dr. Duke believes that the Delmas School District does provides professional development activities that give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging state academic content standards and student academic achievement standards. Dr. Duke explained that their professional development activities are designed to "help tie together content and state standards so that we are helping them know about the subject but in the context of the standard."

To give more support to teachers and principals, the Delmas School District has participated in Georgia's Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI). This institute is designed to help school leaders to be successful in their efforts to improve student academic

achievement and in their efforts to reach the school and district school improvement goals. The institute provides intensive two or three day basic training sessions in which several districts participate simultaneously. In addition, the GLISI staff members follow up with visits to the districts and through monitoring progress and providing support for each district. GLISI uses a variety of research based strategies to deliver models of effective practices to school leaders. The institute also offers other leadership training programs across the state. The institute began in 2002. “It has impacted us greatly,” Dr. Duke emphasized in speaking about GLISI. The Delmas School District participated in the very first training that GLISI held. Dr. Duke said the following about GLISI:

I think if I were to characterize what GLISI means, it is to help principals understand their leadership in developing teachers and not just being the manager of the building, but really understanding about what it means to be sure that every child has an effective teacher, and that it just doesn’t come from the professional learning department. So GLISI is almost magical how they do that, but I think they do it partly from the business standpoint and partly from a challenge standpoint, but mainly the thing that they do is from a coaching standpoint.

In the Delmas School District, everyone who goes through the GLISI training has a district coach, and “that coach comes to them asking ‘Have you done your work?’ ‘Have you done your portfolio?’” The portfolios involve collecting data and working with data. Dr. Duke noted, “So, it’s a very good model for what the process looks like and it has really helped to change our system.” The Delmas School District has sent “many people” to the GLISI training. Dr. Duke shared that the Delmas School District “still have staff who have not been able to go, but are very interested in participating.” Dr. Duke said, “The district will continue to be involved in GLISI.”

4. Provide professional development that helps improve classroom management skills.

The Delmas School District does provide professional development that helps improve

classroom management skills. Dr. Duke explained that “classroom management is a major focus of the new teacher induction, but it is also available to veteran teachers.” After the new teacher induction, the Delmas School District has follow up classes in which “we continue to provide information and support for new teachers that are having difficulties. Dr. Duke explained:

For these activities, we use several consultants who share with the teachers effective school practices, and we use behavior specialists who teach the classroom management classes. The professional development activities for classroom management include follow-ups through classroom observations and monitoring for teachers’ improvement.

Classroom management is not only offered to new teachers, but also to veteran teachers. It is offered district-wide to “teachers who are considered at risk of not having their contracts renewed and an at-risk meeting is held with principals and administrators.” Dr. Duke attends the meetings, provides individualized professional development and creates special classes for the teacher, if necessary. She shared:

It could be on-line classes if it is somebody who is technology savvy and just needs some brush up. It could be a face-to-face with a behavior specialist or somebody who really needs some intensive intervention and needs people to come in to their classroom.

The Delmas School District administrators also work with teachers in classroom management to “de-escalate situations” through courses on communication and effective behavioral intervention strategies.

5. Provide professional development activities that are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher’s performance in the classroom and are not one day or short-term workshops or conferences. The Delmas School District provides professional development activities that are “high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher’s performance in the classroom. These opportunities are not one day or short-term workshops or conferences.” Dr. Duke gave an

example of how the Delmas School District is choosing to be proactive in providing activities that meet this definition. Dr. Duke shared, “For several years the Delmas School District participated in a national organization that involved attending several conferences each year. District administrators thought that attendance at the conferences was mandatory.” Moreover, Dr. Duke explained, “One year we kind of challenged the process.” Dr. Duke shared that district administration decided not to attend the conferences. She elaborated:

We said, ‘let’s do something else with that money and not go to the conference.’ Our principals agreed that they had seen enough, heard enough, and that we are beyond where people are going to attend the conference. So we are really moving away from the whole idea of the conference, which was very typical when I came into the system. We need to look more at what specifically the Delmas School District needs.

She believed that the move to “not automatically attend conferences” was a “positive move that gave Delmas more control” over the professional development activities and monies.

6. Provides professional development that helps support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification. The Delmas School District provides professional development that helps support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification. Dr. Duke explained that teachers receiving training and certification through the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP) are required to keep portfolios as part of their coursework for the program. However, the Delmas School District was not requiring portfolios for the new teachers who had received certification through university education programs. Dr. Duke explained that this was a problem for the new TAPP teachers because it “made them really stand out as different from the teachers who came through the regular education routes.” She related how the problem was solved: “We decided to have all

new teachers keep portfolios. This became a valuable professional development activity for new teachers.” She further shared, “It was so successful that we continue to do this because it provides good support for new teachers.”

7a. Provide professional development activities that advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are based on scientifically based research. According to Dr. Duke, “all of the Delmas School District’s initiatives provide professional development activities that advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are based on scientifically based research.” Dr. Duke explained that federal funding is a main source for their initiatives. She made the following statement:

The money has to be used on researched based activities. We’ve done our due diligence to make sure that everything that needs done has some kind of study or data collection that would give us that evidence because I do have to turn that in when they do their audit.

Dr. Duke emphasized, “The Delmas School District is careful to comply with federal regulations, and we are prepared to provide documentation of the professional development we provide to our teachers.” One example of a professional development activity that helps teachers understand effective instructional strategies is a “book study on Marzano’s *Classroom Instruction that Works* (2001).” Dr. Duke noted, “Approximately 90 percent of the schools in the Delmas School District have used the book study. It became a major initiative for the Delmas School District that has proved to be very effective for teachers.”

7b. Provides professional development activities strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers. The Delmas School District provides professional development activities strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teacher through an eight step process. The eight-step process is based on the book,

Closing the Achievement Gap: No Excuses, by Gerald Anderson and Pat Davenport (2002). The process has been presented to all schools. Speaking about Gerald Anderson and Pat Davenport, Dr. Duke said, “They came out of Texas and wrote a book called *Closing the Achievement Gap: No Excuses*. So they came and worked with 10 schools.” Anderson and Davenport had follow-up trainings, and the Delmas School District administrators monitored the process in the schools. Dr. Duke recalled what happened:

Then we began to hear from other schools asking, ‘What are they doing? What do they mean instructional focus and instructional calendar and pacing and all that?’ This resulted in going to the other 10 schools. We filled up in a second. So, at that point we went ahead and scheduled them for another 10 schools and filled that up and that took care of all of our elementary and middle and the only schools that were remaining were the high schools and we put them off and put them off and put them off and finally in January, we brought them on board. All of the Delmas School District schools have been trained in the eight-step process.

Dr. Duke called the process “a fabulous mechanism for strategies for improving student achievement.” “Process checks” are done at the schools after the initial training and Dr. Duke explained:

Every one of our schools has been trained in the eight-step process and it has been a fabulous mechanism for strategies for improving student achievement. It talks about ‘test talk’ and having instructional focus that focuses on the data where you can enrich and master that area of weakness. It’s just been a masterful process. So, that’s what we are doing system-wide, specifically looking at data.

The training has been “very popular and has helped teachers to understand using data to improve student achievement.” Dr. Duke again pointed out, “Delmas’ professional development strategies are aligned with and directly related to state academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments.”

9. Provide professional development that includes instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents. No Child Left Behind requires that professional development include instruction in

ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents. Dr. Duke responded, “That is probably a real weakness,” and she explained: “When the school councils first started, the Delmas School District administrators asked schools to have teachers share with the school councils what they were doing in professional development and share the system initiative.” However, Dr. Duke noted that “it’s just an assumption that I have that they are still doing that.” She believes, “Parents are probably hearing more about professional development and school initiatives at PTA meetings in individual schools. There is not a district plan, but there is opportunity for the parents to learn about what is happening in the district.”

10. Are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments. Although the Delmas School District has a small Hispanic student population (one percent), the school district does provide “help for the teachers that have Hispanic students.” The Delmas School District has a coordinator for the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. Dr. Duke explained, “Professional development funding is allocated to the coordinator to use at her discretion for ESOL activities. There are two teachers who have assumed the role of teaching ESOL and coordinating the classes.” Recently, these two lead ESOL teachers invited the state ESOL coordinator to come to the Delmas School District and make a presentation to teachers. Dr. Duke talked about the presentation as follows:

The teachers just loved that and we made sure that her comments aligned to our literacy initiative and efforts. She sent her Vita which shows that’s what she was really all about, you know, looking at Balanced Literacy. So we were very pleased.

Dr. Duke explained, “Professional development for ESOL is an evolving process.” She shared, “The ESOL coordinators are still learning how to have effective workshops and were learning about the importance of following up with teachers after the initial training sessions.” She explained that “when the ESOL lead teachers held their first few training sessions, they did not plan to do any kind of post-training activities, but then they realized follow-up was something that they had to do.” They did have their first follow-up a few weeks after the presentation. According to Dr. Duke, “the number of students needing ESOL is increasing. Therefore, this is a valuable professional development activity for veteran teachers.”

11. Provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and core academic subjects in which the teachers teach.

Dr. Duke expressed the importance of technology training for teachers in the Delmas School District. She pointed out that the Delmas School District “provides many technology professional development activities.” According to Dr. Duke, the Delmas School District has “a fairly extensive technology department” and a Director of Instructional Technology “who arranges the training.” Dr. Duke does not coordinate the professional development for technology through her department. However, the two departments collaborate on providing technology professional development, and the Director of Instructional Technology does consult with Dr. Duke. They have been collaborating because they received a “huge amount of money” in their ELOST for the purchase of technology. The technology department held a fair for teachers to select the technology items that they could receive. Dr. Duke has been working with Director of Instructional Technology to develop the plan that they are going to use for the technology training. Dr. Duke explained, “We have a first draft of the plan and some extensive

notes. We are being careful to ensure that the training will be effective professional development.”

12. Regularly evaluate professional development activities for the impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student achievement. The Delmas School District uses the Balanced Scorecard approach to regularly evaluate professional development activities for the impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student achievement. Dr. Duke shared, “Before we started using this approach, it was very frustrating because a teacher or principal would say that their test student scores improved, but they could not identify why they improved.” When Dr. Duke would ask what they did to improve the scores, “They would just say, ‘We don’t know. We just got better.’” The balanced scorecard approach has helped teachers and principals. In reference to this approach, Dr. Duke gave the following explanation:

What we are trying to say is let’s capture everything you are doing so we will know what is causing that improvement, or, if it doesn’t improve, then we will know we have to add more or change out what we are doing. So, I think that’s where the answer is. Balanced scorecard.

The balanced scorecard approach “has enabled teachers and principals to use data to identify effective instruction for improved student instruction.”

13. Provide instruction and methods of teaching children with special needs. The Delmas School District has a large special education department. Providing instruction and methods of teaching children with special needs is part of the professional development activities for veteran teachers. Dr. Duke works with the special education administrator to develop professional development. She shared, “I’m actually in the process of doing a year-long plan for teacher training that will involve special education teachers.”

14. *Include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice.* Analyzing data to discern student achievement and student needs was a part of professional development for veteran teachers in the Delmas School District. Dr. Duke said, “A lot of training had been provided in the Delmas School District on analyzing data, and the principals were very savvy about that.” Analyzing data is one of the required courses in the individual learning plans. The Delmas School District had a district-wide professional development course on analyzing data for principals and lead teachers. The principals and teachers redelivered the information to all other staff in their schools. According to Dr. Duke, principals are leading the way. She explained:

The principals’ job is to go back and train the other teachers and so they’ve done that and because it’s on the original individual learning plan, they have to keep doing it every year for new teachers. It can’t just go away. So, they’ve become pretty good at it because they have done it so much; but principals are leading that process, and because they are leading that process, teachers are realizing that their accountability level is pretty high in terms of meeting the needs of their children.

Looking at data is an important element in determining teacher effectiveness. Student data results are used as a tool in the Delmas School District to determine a teacher’s effectiveness. Dr. Duke shared:

It’s a matter of looking at that Marzano data and seeing the impact that a teacher has on student effectiveness; and you can’t really afford one year of a child being with an ineffective teacher; and so our system has certain standards, and if a principal has a teacher that they have worked with and we have developed a PDP and they are not showing improvement, then let them go.

According to Dr. Duke, the professional development training for analyzing data has remained a “basic requirement for all certified staff.”

15. *Provide instruction in ways that teachers, principals and other personnel can more effectively work with parents.* The Delmas School District does provide instruction in ways that teachers, principals, and other personnel can more effectively work with parents. However,

according to Dr. Duke, the activities for this are carried out through the office of the district Title I administrator. She explained, “They do a lot with parent connections. We have a Title I Teacher and a Parent Resource Center, and there is a family coordinator and so forth and she does a lot of that.” It is interesting to note that the demographics as presented in Chapter 4 reveal that the Delmas School District had a student enrollment of 24,583 in the 2004-2005 school year, and 27 of the 39 schools in the district were designated as Title I schools.

16. *Involve the forming of partnerships with colleges and universities in their teacher programs.* One of the professional development definitions in the federal NCLB Law involves the forming of partnerships with colleges and universities in their teacher programs. The Delmas School District has formed partnerships as a district with two local colleges. One of the ways they partner with the colleges is through the student teaching activity. Dr. Duke elaborated, “In other words, they know the nature of the school; they know the teachers and so they actually call it a partnership and the partnership is where we put our field experience or our student teacher placement.”

Dr. Duke said that “more importantly” concerning professional development for veteran teachers is the fact that “our superintendent is very savvy and interested in higher ed and working with higher ed to help us do a number of things.” One of the colleges which had not offered an education degree had recently launched an education program. Dr. Duke and the Delmas School District superintendent met with college officials about forming a partnership that would not only help develop new math and science teachers, but would also enrich the Delmas School District’s veteran math and science teachers through content courses provided by the college professors for these veteran teachers. The college is seeking a grant that will provide funding for

their professors for release time, summer opportunities, and stipends for veteran teachers for math and science. Dr. Duke said they are awaiting approval of the grant now.

18. Provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in professional development activities to ensure that the teachers have the knowledge and skills and are implementing those activities in the classroom. The Delmas School District provides “follow-up training” to teachers who have participated in professional development activities to ensure that the teachers have the knowledge and skills and are implementing those activities in the classroom. Dr. Duke said that “the best way that we have done this is through our instructional coaches.” There is an instructional coach in every elementary school and their sole purpose is to ensure the implementation of the summer long training that is done for all of the teachers. Dr. Duke shared, “They have made all the difference in the world in terms of that information being seen and used in the classroom.” Principals also go to the professional development classes and work very closely with the instructional coaches. Dr. Duke further explained the importance of the principals’ involvement. According to Dr. Duke, principal involvement has the following goal:

to make sure that the instructional coaches are in those classrooms and doing model lessons and doing observations and doing whatever it takes to either re-teach or to remediate a teacher that may have forgotten some point or piece of that training.

According to Dr. Duke, this follow-up to the summer professional development activities is a key element for the success in the Delmas School District in improving classroom instruction.

In reference to the follow-up for professional development activities, when asked if there is a constant support system for teachers that are already in the classroom, Dr. Duke responded, “Again, it depends on the level. I think in elementary, we have a better constant support system because they tend to be our more willing learners.” Dr. Duke continued to explain that “both

elementary principals and teachers tend to be both more of the ones who are grasping at knowledge and more willing to try new things.” She said that the middle school personnel are a “little bit less so and the ‘high schoolers’ a lot less so.” She said, “We don’t really have a good way of following-up with high school teachers.” Dr. Duke explained that she “gets very frustrated with a lot of the initiatives” they have at the high schools. Most of the initiatives at the high schools are High Schools That Work or SREB oriented. The district has a coordinator for high school professional development. However, Dr. Duke explained, “We have so much transition in that that person isn’t moving in the direction that we need to go in terms of quality professional development, but we are getting there.” Dr. Duke said that she pressures the coordinator, and she made the following remarks:

She takes it a lot; she’s very good natured about it. I think we’ll get there. It just takes a lot more effort and high school people are less willing to have a coach or somebody stand behind them and say, ‘That’s right.’ They say, ‘Close the door and let me do my thing.’

Dr. Duke reiterated that she thought their “best efforts” of implementation and following up on professional development activities were at the elementary level.

Final Thoughts

At the end of the second interview session, when asked if she had anything else that she would like to add about professional development and veteran teachers, Dr. Duke at first hesitated, but then she responded with the following:

No. Well, I hate to say no and then go on. What I would say is that I think Georgia, in general, in relation to professional development has done really well in capitalizing on what the state or the nation and the NSDC organization wants professional development to be. So, I’m feeling very fortunate to be here in this state, and I know the other states are trying to deal with No Child Left Behind issues, and they don’t have a process in place that helps to do that. I think Georgia did itself honor and helped those of us who took advantage of the information to get where we needed to be.

As we closed the session, Dr. Duke was very cordial and seemed to have enjoyed discussing her perspectives on professional development and veteran teachers in the Delmas School District.

CHAPTER 6

MAHAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

This chapter reports the findings of the case study of the second participant, Ann Overton, in the Mahan School District. After the two interviews were conducted, the data were categorized and coded, and patterns were noted across the responses to the interview questions asked of Ann Overton. During the course of the two interviews with Ms. Overton, 11 major categories emerged. Table 6.1 presents the major findings in relation to each of the three research questions.

Table 6.1: *Research Questions and Emerging Categories*

Research Questions	Emerging Categories
What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on the process of developing and implementing the policies and procedures adopted by their school districts to provide ongoing professional learning activities that provide support for veteran teachers to be highly qualified?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beliefs about Professional Learning• Professional Learning: New vs. Old• High Quality Professional Learning• Learning Communities
What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on providing veteran teachers with professional development activities which are aligned with the school district's comprehensive improvement plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Professional Learning• School Improvement and Priorities• The New Process• Team Effort
What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on implementing changes for veteran teachers in professional development activities as a result of The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Job Embedded Professional Learning• Concerns of Veteran Teachers• Resistance to Change

Policies and Procedures Supporting the Professional Development

The first overall research question sought to gain the perspectives of central office professional development administrators regarding the policies and procedures about the ongoing professional development provided to veteran teachers and highly qualified. Four categories emerged relative to the first research question through the interviews with Ms. Overton. The four emerging categories were the following:

- Beliefs about Professional Learning
- Professional Learning: New vs. Old
- High Quality Professional Learning
- Learning Communities

The following sections present a discussion of the emerging categories through the perspective of Ms. Overton and through the examination of the artifacts.

Beliefs about Professional Learning

Ms. Overton believed that the No Child Left Behind Act meant that the Mahan School District should have highly qualified teachers for all children in the district. She believes that the law charges school districts to be sure that they have teachers who are highly qualified teaching all of their children. Ms. Overton responded to the question, “What does No Child Left Behind mean to you relative to highly qualified?” with the following: “The way that it hits me, I can tell you, high quality professional learning and ensuring that we have high quality teachers.” High quality professional learning was emphasized repeatedly in the interview with Ms. Overton as being the necessary ingredient for quality education for children.

In discussing her perspectives on providing professional development to veteran teachers, one of the topics that Ms. Overton referred to often was the “professional learning beliefs and goals for the Mahan School District.” She included these beliefs and goals in the district’s

Professional Learning Handbook because she believed that every Mahan School District employee should have a written copy of these.

Ms. Overton precisely defined her beliefs and the district's belief's about professional learning. As she spoke with the researcher, she had a copy of the Professional Learning Handbook which she wrote for the Professional Learning Department. Ms. Overton talked about the time she spent developing the handbook. She believes that teachers should "understand not only the requirements for professional learning in the Mahan School District but also the reason for those requirements." She believed these "requirements and reasons" are best conveyed in the Professional Learning Handbook which she wrote. There are nine professional learning beliefs for the Mahan School District. These professional learning beliefs include:

1. The primary purpose of professional learning is to improve learning of a diverse student population.
 2. Professional learning is fundamental to school improvement.
 3. Professional learning facilitates effective change and innovation in a mutually supportive environment.
 4. Professional learning is a shared process that promotes growth in individuals and organizations.
 5. Professional learning responds to the diverse needs of all personnel.
 6. Professional learning is an integral component of school and school system programs.
 7. Planning and decision in professional learning programs must include those who receive the training.
 8. Effective professional learning must be based on theory research and sound practice.
 9. Effective professional learning is responsive to the life-long needs of adult learners.
- (Mahan Professional Learning Handbook).

Ms. Overton's discussion about developing, implementing, and providing professional development to veteran teachers centered around providing professional learning that is aligned with the Mahan School District's beliefs and goals.

Professional Learning: New vs. Old

The professional learning goals of the Mahan School District are clearly stated in the Professional Learning Handbook. Again, Ms. Overton reiterated the importance of informing the teachers of the beliefs and goals of the district. Ms. Overton talked with enthusiasm about the professional learning program in the Mahan School District. She believes that the veteran teachers understand the importance of professional learning because of information such as the handbook that is given to them. The Mahan School District professional learning goals are as follows:

- To provide an orientation to the system procedures for all new employees.
- To provide an orientation to sit and/or department newly assigned employees
- To provide high quality professional learning activities to all employees consistent with the system and school comprehensive improvement plan. (Mahan School District Professional Learning Handbook).

Ms. Overton spoke about the high quality professional learning activities offered to the Mahan School District employees. She gave examples of such as Differentiated Instruction, Writing Workshops, and Balanced Literacy Institute. High quality professional learning is a topic which Ms. Overton is continually researching, because she believes that all professional learning must be high quality.

Ms. Overton calls the Mahan School District's professional development plan a "new vision for professional learning." The No Child Left Behind Act mandated quality professional development for teachers, and Ms. Overton believes that the "new vision for professional learning" fulfills that NCLB mandate of providing high quality professional development. The new vision includes three major components that drive professional learning in the Mahan School District. According to Ms. Overton, professional learning must be "results-driven, job-embedded, and standards-based." Again, these components are included in the Professional

Learning Handbook. Professional learning in the Mahan School District is assessed based on student results. Results-driven professional learning in the Mahan School District is based on the following questions presented by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) and included in the Mahan School District's Professional Learning Handbook:

- What do students need to know and be able to do?
- What do educators need to know and be able to do to ensure student success?
- What professional learning will ensure that educators acquire the necessary knowledge and skills?

According to Ms. Overton, results-driven professional learning in the Mahan School District is “not only a vision but also a practice.” She believes that veteran teachers understand this, and “as they see positive results in their students, they understand the beneficial effects of the ‘new’ professional learning.”

Ms. Overton believes that professional learning “should be job-embedded,” and in the Mahan School District, she believes, much of the professional learning is “just that.” The following definition for job-embedded professional learning is in the Mahan School District's Professional Learning Handbook:

Happens during the work day in the workplace.

Designed to support team learning.

Offered to all teachers all of the time.

At school, it is everyone's job to learn.

Although Ms. Overton believes in job-embedded professional learning, she said that the Mahan School District still provides some professional learning that is not job-embedded. For example, some conferences and workshops held outside of the district and attended by teachers and administrators may not be considered job embedded, but these still “have their place and are

important.” However, she explained, “More and more of the professional learning in the Mahan School District is job-embedded.”

Ms. Overton strongly believes that professional development must be “standards based.” According to Ms. Overton, “Standards-based professional learning is the basis for all professional learning in the Mahan School District.” As part of the statement of the vision for professional learning in the Mahan School District, the Professional Learning Handbook lists the following concerning three divisions adopted by the state of Georgia from the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards-based learning in the Mahan School District as such:

Content: What knowledge and skills must educators acquire to produce higher levels of learning for all students?

Process: How will learning be organized to support adult acquisition of new knowledge and skills?

Context: How will the organization be structured to support adult learning?

The standards which address each of the above areas have been adopted by the Mahan School District, and Ms. Overton believes strongly in the standards.

Ms. Overton showed the researcher how she compared the “old staff development” to the “new professional learning” in the Professional Learning Handbook “just to give the teachers an understanding.” The comparison lists the following components of each:

Staff development	Professional Learning
Courses to renew my certificate	Standards-Based
Conferences to keep up with my fields	Data-Driven
Training to increase my knowledge and skills	Results-Oriented
	Job-Embedded
	Collaborative

She pointed out that some of the previous staff development is still in place, but now those components of staff development are part of the “big picture” of professional learning in the Mahan School District. Her statement in the Professional Learning Handbook says, “Those

components must be expanded to make sure our work istrue professional learning.” The statement reveals Ms. Overton’s beliefs about staff development and professional learning.

High Quality Professional Learning

Ms. Overton said that the Mahan School District adopted new policies and procedures for providing professional development to veteran teachers as mandated in No Child Left Behind. She explained that the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) developed a set of 12 standards for staff development that were later adopted by the state of Georgia and called Professional Learning Standards. The Mahan School District adopted these same 12 standards. In a very serious tone, Ms. Overton talked about the importance of these standards. She became excited as she said, “Let me show you what we have. I’ve got some information. Let me get them for you.” She turned around in her chair and reached for files in the cabinet on the side of her desk. Clearly, Ms. Overton believes that the 12 standards for professional learning tell the story of high quality professional learning in the Mahan School District. As she handed the NSDC’s standards for staff development to the researcher, she emphasized, “Every principal, every Assistant Principal for Instruction (API) received these standards.” The 12 standards are listed in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: *NSDC Standards for Professional Learning adopted by the Mahan School District*

CONTEXT STANDARDS	
LEARNING COMMUNITIES	Professional learning that improves the learning of all students organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.
LEADERSHIP	Professional learning that improves the learning of all students requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.

Table 6.2 *continued*

RESOURCES:	Professional learning that improves the learning of all students requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.
DATA-DRIVEN	Professional learning that improves the learning of all students uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.
EVALUATION	Professional learning that improves the learning of all students uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.
RESEARCH-BASED	Professional learning that improves the learning of all students and prepares to apply research to decision making.
DESIGN	Professional learning that improves the learning of all students uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.
LEARNING	Professional learning that improves the learning of all students applies knowledge about human learning and change.
COLLABORATION	Professional learning that improves the learning of all students provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.
CONTENT STANDARDS	
EQUITY:	Professional learning that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.
QUALITY TEACHING	Professional learning that improves the learning of all students deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT	Professional learning that improves the learning of all students provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

Ms. Overton explained that at each school the Assistant Principals for Instruction (APIs) are the professional learning coordinators. She further explained that she and all the APIs in the district

have been trained in the standards. She emphasized that it was important for administrators and teachers to “know and understand” what the standards were before they implemented the standards across the district. Therefore, the first thing they did was to provide informational meetings explaining the standards. In the Mahan School District, there is an assistant principal for instruction (API) assigned to each school, and these assistant principals for instruction, along with Ms. Overton, delivered training to all the teachers. Ms. Overton said that the assistant principals for instruction are her “liaisons to the schools.” She elaborated,

We worked very hard to make the teachers aware of the professional learning standards, because we wanted our personnel to know about the twelve standards, and that if those twelve standards are in place, students are going to learn at higher levels and they are going to achieve.

Ms. Overton believed that high quality professional learning would impact student learning to raise achievement in the schools.

Ms. Overton described how the Mahan School District participated in the Standards of Assessment Inventory (SAI) through the NSCD. The assessment inventory is made available for purchase by school districts in either a print or online version. The inventory consists of a survey for school staff to complete, and the results indicate whether the school district’s professional development is aligned with the 12 NSDC standards. According to Ms. Overton, “The SAI measured the implementation of these 12 standards within the school district and it tells you that and the rationale for it and things that you can do.” One of the standards centers around bringing staff together in learning communities. As Ms. Overton talked about the learning communities, she said that these are part of the “new” professional learning in the Mahan School District.

Learning Communities

The Mahan School District chose to focus on the learning communities standard first because “the way that we see it and the way that we’ve read it and according to what the other

experts have said, you focus on learning communities, and the other 11 (standards) then come right along.” Ms. Overton made the following explanation about helping the veteran teachers understand the new professional learning:

So, that’s one thing, making them aware of the standards, letting them know that these are our priorities that in every day every educator will participate in some form of high quality professional learning – be it with the communities, reading and talking about books, journals, performing with study groups and picking a topic to study.

Learning communities affords the teachers opportunities to meet and talk about strategies and classroom instruction. In the Mahan School District, one of the outcomes of forming learning communities has been book studies. Ms. Overton said that these have been “very popular among the teachers,” and the teachers seem “to enjoy” participating in the studies. Ms. Overton elaborated that the teachers enjoy book studies because they can:

Just talking professionally about how you use this strategy. ‘Well, I’m trying KWL in my classroom. Is it working with you?’ If it didn’t work, ‘come and talk to me, come and see what I’m doing and see if we can fix it.’

The collaboration among the teachers has made the learning communities successful. Ms. Overton believes that learning communities has been an effective way of providing professional development for veteran teachers. The Mahan School District, according to Ms. Overton, is still focusing on learning communities as an initiative for professional learning in the district.

Professional Development and the District Improvement Plan

The second overall research question sought to gain the perspectives of central office administrators regarding providing veteran teachers with professional development aligned with the district’s comprehensive improvement plan. Throughout the interview with Ms. Overton, four categories emerged from the content of the interviews and the artifacts examined.

These categories included:

- New Professional Learning

- School Improvement and Priorities
- The New Process
- Team Effort

A discussion of these emerging categories is provided in the following sections.

New Professional Learning

Another change in professional learning that occurred in the Mahan School District was using various forms of professional learning such as “reflections and learning logs.” As Ms. Overton reached into her file and pulled out a paper, she handed it to the researcher and said the following:

All of these are the types of professional learning and a lot of people seem to think, particularly whenever I came here, that the only type of professional learning was just sit and get and it’s not. I remember them saying to me, ‘I can get credit for these things?’ ‘Yes, you can.’ These are all valuable professional learning activities.

On the list were 20 forms of professional learning, which Ms. Overton explained are used every day in the Mahan School District.

In the Professional Learning Handbook for the Mahan School District, one of the first pages includes the board of education emblem and the title, *High Quality Professional Learning: Every Educator, Every Day*. Listed in Table 6.3 are the titles of the 20 forms of professional learning to which Ms. Overton was referring:

Table 6.3: *High Quality Professional Learning: Every Educator, Every Day*.

Professional Learning Communities	Journal Article/Book Studies
Study Groups	Professional Dialogues
Training	Mentoring
Conferences	Coaching
Journaling/Reflections	Lesson Studies
Examination and Analysis of Student Work	Data Analysis and Interpretation
Action Research	Workshops
Professional Organizations	Curriculum Teams
Demonstration Lessons	Vertical Study Teams
Continuous Improvement	Professional Readings

Ms. Overton said that she gave “every teacher a bookmark” with these 20 professional learning activities printed on the bookmark.

Ms. Overton created the Professional Learning Handbook for the teachers and administrators of the Mahan School District because she wanted the handbook to include the state’s vision for professional learning as well as the mission and a statement of the beliefs of the Mahan School District. She said that the state’s new vision is that “professional learning should be based on the 12 standards, and those 12 standards are broken apart in the content, process, and context.” She said that “Mahan is focusing on results,” and that the professional learning must be “results driven.” Ms. Overton described the focus as follows:

We are focusing on results here, what it is we want children to learn, know, understand and be able to do and how are we going to know when they have met that. What are we going to do professionally to ensure that they are that way and that it’s job embedded.

Professional learning has changed in the Mahan School District. Ms Overton explained that although professional learning activities such as “conferences and workshops” are still used for teachers to renew their teaching certificates, they are no longer “the sole means of getting professional learning. Professional learning is all of this as well.” As Ms. Overton explained this, she pointed to the list of professional learning activities in her hand.

Ms. Overton believes that the new professional learning is “more effective and more related” to the needs of teachers and to classroom instruction. Relative to professional development, she talked about “pre-No Child Left Behind and post-No Child Left Behind.” Ms. Overton spoke with authority about the “new” professional learning. She said that she believed that the movement for improved professional learning was “underway at the same time” that the No Child Left Behind Act was being developed. “I think the movement was underway at the same time, if you will, because we realized there was a problem.” The “impetus” from the state

came when the state “cut staff development funds several years ago.” According to Ms. Overton, the state legislature cut funds because of the following:

You had people going to London for a week for the London Flower Show and using professional learning and making it a professional learning experience. How in the world? And then teachers getting credit for things that had nothing to do with what was going to help the children achieve in the classroom. Something had to be done and I think the movement was underway.

She again pointed out the documents she had pulled from her file that included definitions of various forms of professional learning, how to earn professional learning credit, and the district guidelines.

School Improvement and Priorities

As Ms. Overton sat forward in her chair, she emphasized that “everything, every course in this system that we offer, must be tied to the needs in our system or the school improvement plan.” As she further explained this statement, she made it clear that she “completely agrees” with this concept. Ms. Overton said that there are now state restrictions on the areas for which a teacher can receive professional learning unit (PLU) credit. She explained that a certified teacher “can only earn PLU credit” in one of the following four areas:

Professional learning activities related to the teacher’s content area field of certification

Professional learning activities related to the teacher’s school improvement plan

Professional learning activities related to the district school improvement plan

Professional learning activities related to a teacher’s individual professional development plan (PDP). (The Mahan School District Professional Learning Handbook)

Ms. Overton believes that these restrictions on professional learning unit credits have made a “positive impact” on professional learning for veteran teachers as well as new teachers. She explained the following:

It cut down on a lot of this: 'I'm an art teacher, but I want to go over here and take this graphic arts outside of my area.' We've had people do that just because they just need that PLU and this is the only thing that is offered and 'I'm going to take it.' Well, you can't do it anymore and to me that is a big change.

She referred to this "big change" happening after the No Child Left Behind Act was passed.

However, she gave credit to the state of Georgia for beginning a reform effort in 2000 with the move toward accountability in education. "I believe it was back in 2000 on accountability when people kicked and screamed and carried on about our accountability." She shared that although many people did not like the way in which accountability was implemented, she agreed that "something had to be done." Ms. Overton indicated that the changes in professional learning that have been implemented since the No Child Left Behind Act were "much easier to bring about because of the accountability movement." She elaborated, "Because the ground work was laid back in 2000 when No Child Left Behind hit, many of the things that we were already doing in this state put us ahead of the game."

As Ms. Overton oversees professional learning for the Mahan School District, she makes it a point to emphasize the priorities of the district in her professional development classes and in her communications with administrators and teachers. As she works with individual schools to find the best professional learning activities for their needs and the school improvement plan, she uses the opportunity "at every turn" to show them how the professional learning activities they are planning "must be tied to the needs in our system or school improvement plan." She continued to explain the importance of school improvement and the need for all staff to understand:

Everything goes together, but this is one way that I have let them know where our priorities are and that everything that we do ties back to the mission of the school system to produce high achieving students – every bit of it.

Ms. Overton said that when requests come to her from administrators or other staff members who want to plan and teach a professional learning class, the first thing she says is, “ ‘Well, first of all, tell me how does this meet the mission of our school system? How is this going to increase the student achievement in this system?’ And if it doesn’t, it doesn’t get offered.” She continued to explain that there is “not enough time” in the Mahan School District to offer any professional learning classes that do not tie into the improvement plan and mission of the district.

The emphasis Ms. Overton gave to professional learning as it relates to school improvement reveals the strong belief that she has in the relationship between the two. Ms. Overton explained:

The needs and priorities are identified and that plan and/or system plan for improvement. So, everything that we do ties to those plans and our board policies reflect it. Our guidelines reflect it. In the policy, it states that guidelines will be developed on a yearly basis and determine what the procedures will be for earning PLUs to help meet the 24 hour board requirement policy. So, our policy reflects that years be tied to the school improvement plan.

Ms. Overton further explained all professional learning requests and plans that are turned in to her reflect the improvement plans and adhere to the guidelines. She shared, “So, they understand what the mission is and what the priorities are, and everything is funneled to those priorities to help meet our mission.”

Ms. Overton then began to talk about how the district changed not only the activities in which the veteran teachers could participate for professional learning, but how the district also changed the procedures for earning professional learning credits. The Mahan School District requires that all teachers and other certified staff earn a minimum of two professional learning credits annually. The staff could earn these credits using what were called “earn-off” days. The days spent in professional learning activities could be traded off for holidays during certain times of the school year. Thus, the name, earn-off was used. For instance, a teacher could participate

in professional learning activities in the summer for two days and these days would be earn-off days for two days just before the Thanksgiving holiday. Teachers who did not complete activities before the holidays were required to participate in the professional learning activities offered on those two days before the Thanksgiving holiday. Ms. Overton further explained, “They were going to get their training whether they got it during the summer or got it during the school year.”

The New Process

The district decided to change the procedures for professional learning when they began “training teachers in the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS),” which were new curriculum standards for Georgia schools. Ms. Overton assisted with the professional development classes and the district changed the procedures for all professional learning, not just the presentation of the performance standards. Ms. Overton explained:

We did away with earn-off and we implemented three in-service days within the school calendar for the employees to receive their board required professional learning hours. So, we now do it within the school year, and it’s where you have three in-service days, and you must report on those days, and that’s what we do now and then they earn two PLUs a year.

Employees may also go outside of the Mahan School District to participate in professional learning, but they must first “get approval” from the professional learning department.

Providing professional learning in the Mahan School District is a “team effort” of school based administrators and central office administrators. One of the changes that occurred in the Mahan School District was that the Professional Learning Coordinator works with each individual Assistant Principal for Instruction (APIs) in each school. These APIs are required to have a plan for professional learning in their school and to request funding for that plan. Ms. Overton shared that this strategy works well for the Mahan School District. She explained that

the plan they provide is “not necessarily a needs assessment” as they had required of schools prior to the implementation of new procedures. Ms. Overton further explained that the needs assessment “used to be a form that the State gave out for staff development where you would check off what your needs were.” In speaking about the results of the needs assessment each year, she said, “You would check off what your needs were and it was always number one - stress management. Teachers wanted stress management. It did no good.”

Ms. Overton spoke with conviction as she described the new process for determining the professional learning needs of a school’s staff. The district had chosen to be “results driven.” Ms. Overton elaborated, “So, with our focus on being results driven, we needed to decide on the data, look at all types of data, and determine what our needs were, and then plug in the professional learning to address those needs.” Ms Overton gave an example of determining the professional learning needs of staff in a school in which there was a problem with math scores on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) at a certain grade level. She said about the data, “we need to break that down and see down to the question – what is being asked?” Ms. Overton explained that using student data to drive professional learning is “more productive than using the old needs assessment survey.” When the teachers and administrators examine the student data, they are searching for answers to the questions, “Is the problem the way that we are teaching it, the way that we are asking it, the format of the question, or is it the calendar year in which this is taught?” Ms. Overton emphatically explained:

We need to know the answer to all of this and drill down and find out why the kids scored what they did and what we need to do to make sure that we have the tools that we need to teach these children to help increase their skills.

As Ms. Overton reiterated, “The goal in the Mahan School District is that professional learning is tied to student achievement.” She explained that she still calls this process of looking at student

data a needs assessment but it is not the “old” needs assessment. She related that in the Mahan School District the teachers and administrators are “doing needs assessment by looking at various pieces of data. They are not just looking at a needs assessment on a form that you check off. This was a check form.” Ms. Overton shared that the first year that they implemented the new method for determining professional learning needs the veteran teachers were asking, “Where is the needs assessment?” Ms. Overton related that “over and over again” she had to respond, “We’re not doing needs assessment anymore.” She shared that training the veteran teachers helped them to understand that “you need to look at data. Data needs to drive your decision, and we’ve done some work with them, and they’ve gotten it.”

Team Effort

As Ms. Overton continued, she explained how the Mahan School District has “trained” the veteran teachers and school administrators “to look at data to determine their professional learning needs.” Through training sessions with the teachers and administrators, Ms Overton’s Professional Learning Department has taught them how to use a variety of data sources. Not only does the school staff look at student test scores, but they also consider the school’s plan for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the school improvement plan, the NSDC Standards, and NSDC’s Student Assessment Inventory on the 12 standards. The district personnel further consider discipline reports, report cards, attendance data, and “any piece of data that they have they can use to help determine what is going on in that school and what do you need to do.” Once the school staff has developed a plan for professional learning, they turn in the plan to Ms. Overton for her review and approval

The Mahan School District has a district level professional learning advisory committee (PLAC) as well as individual school site professional learning advisory committees. At the

district level, the committee is composed of administrators from the central office, assistant superintendents, the testing director, all other department directors, and three principals who represent the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Ms. Overton further explained, “So, that’s my own system PLAC committee, and we set the guidelines for professional learning each year.” Ms. Overton “heads up” this collaborative group of administrators. In describing how they go about planning professional learning each year, Ms. Overton said, “We determine, based upon needs that we have seen or heard, what we need to do about certain issues with professional learning.” She explained that the schools are required to have a school professional learning advisory committee, and the school committee operates in the same way as the district committee. In speaking about the schools, she said:

The committee sits down and looks at this data and determines the priorities and the goals that we are going to work on, and they are not reinventing the wheel because the goals echo what’s in their school improvement plan. They are not reinventing the wheel, it’s not an extra piece, it just solidifies and makes sure that all the little holes are being plugged up, basically, if that makes sense.

This site-based, collaborative procedure works well for the Mahan School District, according to Ms. Overton. Veteran teachers as well as new teachers and administrators work in teams. After the school committees meet and determine needs, set priorities, and develop a plan, the committee sends the plan to Ms. Overton. Ms Overton then helps the committee and the Assistant Principals for Instruction (APIs) with further planning for the funding and provision of the professional learning for that school.

Implementing Changes for Veteran Teachers in Professional Development

The third overall research question sought to gain the perspectives of central office administrators regarding the implementation of changes for veteran teachers in professional

development. Three categories emerged throughout the interviews with Ms. Overton. These categories include:

Job Embedded Professional Learning
Concerns of Veteran Teachers
Resistance to Change

The following section describes the three emerging categories that developed as Ms. Overton shared her perspective on veteran teachers relative to the implementation of changes.

Job Embedded Professional Learning

In speaking about providing professional learning for veteran teachers, Ms Overton explained that veteran teachers in the Mahan School District “seem to know what the expectations are.” She believes that because participation in professional learning activities is required, the veteran teachers understand that and willingly participate. She elaborated, “Because professional learning has been made a priority in this district, even before I came, they know what is expected, and there is a high expectation and they know it and we’ve got high performing teachers.” Ms. Overton said that the veteran teachers in the Mahan School District understand that to be “good effective teachers, they have to have training.”

Ms. Overton believes that the Mahan School District Board of Education and district administrators set the tone for the district staff by making the professional learning requirement a priority. She shared that it is clear to teachers that this requirement is tied to their contract and “it is expected as part of their job to grow.” Ms. Overton believes that teachers need to think of themselves as “professionals” and should be treated as such. She said, “Professionals such as doctors and lawyers participate in continuing education in connection with their practices and teachers should do the same.” She views her role as “providing the best possible opportunities to the veteran teachers to help them” have the “training, skills, materials, etc.” they need.

Even though veteran teachers know they must participate in professional learning, Ms. Overton said:

I believe the veteran teachers participate more willingly since the professional learning communities have been adopted. Professional learning communities provide a way for groups of adults to come together as they pursue professional learning related to their school or district improvement plans. Professional learning communities allow teachers and other educators to participate in varied activities instead of the ‘sit and get’ types of workshops. The opportunity for sharing learning and for peer support is appealing not only to the veteran teachers, but also to all teachers.

Ms. Overton’s perspective is that professional learning communities are a focus in the Mahan School District because of the effectiveness of delivering professional learning through this avenue. She further said that in the professional learning communities in the Mahan School District, “the book studies have been popular.” Even though many veteran teachers participate in these newer activities for professional learning, Ms. Overton said, “There are still quite a few veteran teachers who make requests to get professional learning unit credit outside of the district at either conferences or trainings held by other educational agencies.”

Ms. Overton believes that veteran teachers “respond well” to job embedded professional learning. The Mahan School District “has chosen to focus on job embedded professional learning” as opposed to direct instruction in a professional learning class. Job embedded professional learning affords opportunities for veteran teachers to learn within a team setting and to connect the learning to their classroom instruction. One of the popular activities for professional learning that allows teachers to connect their learning experiences to their classroom instruction is the “professional learning log.”

Ms. Overton has promoted the use of professional learning logs. She included these in the Professional Learning Handbook. The logs allow educators to document learning experiences they have that may not be part of a professional learning course. An example of such an

experience is participation in school-based team meetings to discuss and analyze student data and plan instructional strategies to improve student learning. Teachers may receive credit for documenting and presenting evidence of participation in such activities. For some activities, such as attending workshops or conferences that are not offered for credit, the teacher “must receive prior approval” to include that in their learning logs. The learning log not only documents the participation, but also gives “evidence of activities” that the teacher has done as a result of participating in the non-credit activity. Evidence could be lesson plans, samples of student work, and reflections of experiences.

Concerns of Veteran Teachers

As part of the No Child Left Behind Act, teachers must hold state certification in the academic content fields they teach in order to be highly qualified. The administrators in the Mahan School District have worked together to help teachers who did not have the needed content field. Although this is a certification issue, as the district Coordinator of Professional Learning, Ms. Overton has been involved by “providing and coordinating classes for teachers in specific content areas, such as math.” Ms. Overton shared that she believes that some of the veteran teachers feel that they should not have to participate in professional learning to become highly qualified. She indicated that she receives emails and phone calls daily with comments such as, “I’ve got 15 years and I’m not highly qualified?” Ms. Overton said that although she oversees providing courses for veteran teachers who are not highly qualified, she is not the administrator who reviews their certification files. She continued to explain:

There seems to be a lot of frustration with these teachers that they feel like that they are not valued, that what they have done and their record of being an exceptional teacher is just flown by the way side because they are not highly qualified and to me I pick up a lot of resentment about that and it’s veteran teachers.

Ms. Overton works closely with the certification personnel to provide exactly the professional development the teacher needs to be considered highly qualified related to certification requirements.

In addition to helping teachers become highly qualified by adding content fields to their certification, Ms. Overton works with teachers who need extra help in instruction in content areas. Ms Overton explained that “math is an area in which assistance is often needed.” Teachers who need professional learning in math may take classes through the Mahan School District. Ms. Overton related: “These courses will help them to be more effective in the classroom.” Ms. Overton said, “The courses are high quality professional learning and are available to all staff.” She elaborated:

Sometimes an individual teacher is referred to me by a principal or assistant principal for professional learning courses which are not offered in the Mahan School District. When that happens, I research and gather information for the teacher about where courses are offered.

Ms Overton gives assistance and support to individual teachers who are referred to her. Some veteran teachers with many years of experience believe that they may be able to qualify for adding a content area through the HOUSSE⁵ option. In order to do that, Ms Overton researches old staff development records at the Mahan School District to find courses these teachers have taken over the years that may qualify toward giving them enough course hours to add the content area to their certificate.

Resistance to Change

Ms. Overton again stated that the veteran teachers are “very open to professional learning” because, she believes, “they know that it’s expected.” She explained, “They participate

⁵ **HOUSSE** is an assessment used in the state of Georgia as an option for veteran teachers to be highly qualified. The assessment is used to verify competency based on experience, content courses, and performance evaluations.

in that and don't have problem in participating in that. But as far as change, some of your veteran teachers don't like change very much." She said that it is a "challenge" to convince veteran teachers that something new will be helpful to them in their instruction. Ms. Overton continued:

Until they know that, 'Yeah this is really beneficial, this really works, and this is really going to help me,' because in my experience in working with veteran teachers it's 'this too shall pass. If I just wait, this too shall pass.'

Ms. Overton explained that this attitude among veteran teachers may not be as pronounced in the Mahan School District because "we don't typically tend to jump on bandwagons here either." She further explained that the district does not implement every new professional development idea that comes their way. She says they are "selective and careful" not to overload the staff with implementing too much change at one time. However, she stated the following about the veteran teachers:

The veteran teachers tend to be a little bit less flexible as far as implementing things because they've been around and they've 'seen this. I know what I'm doing, I know it's tried and true, this is never gonna work.' Until they see that it works, and then eventually they come around.

Ms. Overton again emphasized that participation in professional learning is mandatory in the Mahan School District, and she believes that there is "less resistance" to professional learning from the veteran teachers because of the requirement.

Federal Guidelines for Professional Development in the No Child Left Behind Act

As part of the interview process, Ms. Overton was given a set of key definitions for professional development from the federal No Child Left Behind Guidelines. Ms. Overton was asked if the Mahan School District provided the activities as indicated in the No Child Left Behind Guidelines. Table 6.4 contains the NCLB guidelines related to professional development. The following was given to Ms. Overton for consideration:

Table 6.4: *Key Definitions for Professional Development from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Title IX, 9101(34)		
My school district provides professional development activities that –		
1	A(i)	improve and increase teachers’ knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified
2	(ii)	are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans;
3	(iii)	give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards;
4	(iv)	improve classroom management skills
5	(v)(I)	are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher’s performance in the classroom; and
	(v)(II)	are not 1-day or short-term workshops or conferences;
6	(vi)	support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification;
7	(vii)	advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are—
7a	(vii)(I)	based on scientifically based research (except that this subclause shall not apply to activities carried out under part D of title II); and
7b	(vii)(II)	strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; and
8	(viii)	are aligned with and directly related to—
8a	(viii)(I)	State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments; and
8b	(viii)(II)	the curricula and programs tied to the standards described in subclause (I) except that this subclause shall not apply to activities described in clauses (ii) and (iii) of section 2123(3)(B);
9	(ix)	are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools to be served under this Act;
10	(x)	are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;

Table 6.4 *continued*

11	(xi)	to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and core academic subjects in which the teachers teach;
12	(xii)	as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;
13	(xiii)	provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs;
14	(xiv)	include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice; and
15	(xv)	include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents; and
	B	may include activities that—
16	(i)	involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish schoolbased teacher training programs that provide prospective teachers and beginning teachers with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers and college faculty;
17	(ii)	create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers; and
18	(iii)	provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in subparagraph (A) or another clause of this subparagraph that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom.

Ms. Overton responded that the Mahan School District provides professional development activities as listed in the No Child Left Behind Guidelines above. Some of the responses were simply a “yes, I think we’ve covered that previously,” while for other definitions she expounded.

1. *Improve and increase teachers’ knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified.* Although she had discussed this definition previously, Ms. Overton emphasized that in the Mahan School District all of the professional development activities are developed to “increase teachers’ knowledge of academic subjects and instructional strategies.” In the Mahan School District, some specific academic content area courses are offered if there are enough teachers who need the course. For instance,

one of the content areas that middle grades teachers needed to add to their certificates was math. Many veteran teachers needed math, and the Mahan School District began offering courses in this area as a professional development series of courses in the district so that teachers would not have to go outside of the district. However, if a teacher needs an academic content course that the Mahan School District does not offer, Ms. Overton assists that teacher in finding courses outside of the district. She explained that often a principal will contact her about a veteran teacher who needs professional development in a particular area. She works with the individual teacher to obtain the courses the teacher needs. Ms. Overton explained the following:

Typically, the principal will contact me and say, ‘Ann, I have a teacher who needs specific help in this. Can you help me? Can you find some resources to help her? Is there a course that we can let her take? What can we do?’

To help assist teachers find professional development that is offered outside of the Mahan School District, links to outside sources have been posted for employees on the district web site. These include links to the State Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) as well as links to colleges and universities. Ms. Overton further elaborated with the following details:

So those courses have to be offered throughout outside agencies, that can’t be offered at an individual school for site-based training unless we have a group of them that come and we’ve got someone that is going to let us run credit through here to get them certified in that content. We’ve let them know where these are offered. ‘If you need these courses, here is where you need to go.’

Ms. Overton believes that the Mahan School District has been very successful in enabling teachers to become highly qualified.

2. Are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans. “All professional learning in the Mahan School District must be related to the district and school improvement plans,” explained Ms. Overton, who will not approve professional learning plans or courses “that are not part of the mission, goal, and improvement plan for the district.”

The Assistant Principals for Instruction (APIs) in the schools along with the principals and their school professional learning advisory committees submit their plans to Ms. Overton. Again, Ms. Overton emphasized that the plans must be based on the “needs of the school, the district or an individual teacher, if needed.” She said, “They know what the mission is and what the priorities are.” She explained that each school submits to her a professional learning plan at the first of the year. Ms. Overton shared the following:

When they have completed the professional learning activity at their school, they turn in the syllabi and some other forms to me so that I can look at those and make sure they are tied to the plan. It’s really good. We pretty much have a tab on it and everybody knows that we’re working toward a common goal.

Ms. Overton is very pleased with the work of the Assistant Principals for Instruction (APIs). She believes that they have “a clear understanding of the procedures, goals, and priorities,” and they follow those procedures “very well.”

3. Provides professional development activities that give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards.

Differentiated instruction is one of the focuses of the Mahan School District Professional Learning Department. Differentiated instruction allows teachers to provide instruction to students in ways that the individual student can best learn. The concept is quite different from the “one size fits all” concept, and teachers learn how “to recognize the needs of the students and how to deliver instruction to each student” in the most effective manner for that student. Ms. Overton believed that professional learning activities that “train teachers in differentiated instruction help to meet the goal of equipping teachers” with the skills in providing instruction in various ways to meet student needs. The courses are offered multiple times, and they are offered

both at school sites and district-wide at various times throughout the year. The following is a list of some of the differentiated instruction classes offered in the Mahan School District:

- Differentiated Instruction – an Introduction and Overview
- Six Aspects of Differentiated Instruction – Trainer of Trainers
- Differentiated Training K -12
- Getting Inside Differentiated Instruction
- Curriculum Differentiation for Gifted Learners

The Mahan School District also offers other professional learning activities that provide assistance for teachers in the skills they need for effective classroom instruction. Some examples of those activities are:

- Developing Lessons for Critical Needs
- Enhancing Student Achievement
- Strategies for At-Risk Students
- Engaging and Meeting the Needs of All Students

Ms. Overton had pulled out the list of courses that the Mahan School District offers for teachers and identified the above courses as some of the ones that addressed this definition of professional development.

In addition, Ms. Overton explained that the Professional Learning Department had been assisting with the “roll out” of the new Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). The Georgia Performance Standards identify the skills and the knowledge that students need to be successful in every content area. In addition, the standards set expectations for teachers to follow in providing instruction. The standards are the basis for instruction in Georgia. Ms. Overton said, “The district changed the way it provided professional learning in order to be able to provide

teachers with training in the GPS. There has been collaboration among all departments to plan how to go about delivering the information and training of the GPS.” The district administrators did not think that all of the GPS professional development classes could be completed in the summer, so they began to consider options for delivering the professional development during the school year. Ms. Overton said, “We tried having classes after school.” However, Ms. Overton noted, “Well, the first year, for reading and language arts, there were some after-school trainings and that was horrible because it’s a horrible time to try to do something because the teachers are tired.”

The next strategy the district used was that they “tried pulling some teachers out of their classes.” Ms. Overton shared, “We pulled; we did have substitute cost and then we realized that we needed to do something.” Ms. Overton explained that this was one of the reasons that they “quit having earn-off days for teachers and implemented three in-service days within the school calendar.” The district administrators “needed to plan” for all staff to receive the professional development in the standards, and this plan gave the school district “more control over the professional learning choices of their teachers.” She emphasized, “All teachers had to be trained in the Georgia Performance Standards.”

4. Provide professional development that helps improve classroom management skills.

Ms. Overton said, “Classroom management skills are always a part of their training for new teachers. Training in classroom management strategies for veteran teachers is also available and “even individual training, if needed, is available.” Professional development in classroom management strategies can be planned based on an individual teacher’s need at the request of the school principal or at the request of the teacher. In Ms. Overton’s list of professional learning

classes offered in the Mahan School District are examples of some of the classes offered in classroom management strategies such as Classroom Management: Strategies for Tough Kids.

5. Provide professional development activities that are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom and are not one day or short-term workshops or conferences. According to Ms. Overton, “Mahan does provide professional development activities that are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom focused.” One of the ways that sustained professional learning activities are provided is through what the Mahan School District calls the “Alternative Weighted PLU Option.” This option provides schools with a way to have teachers implement in their classrooms strategies they have learned in professional development classes. The Alternative Weighted PLU Option has three levels for obtaining PLU credits. The three levels are as follows:

Standard PLU Credit (minimum of 10 contact hours) Seat Time

Weighted PLU Option #2 – Implementation Evidence

Alternative Weighted PLU Option: Impact on Student Achievement Evidence

The first level is for receiving credit for participation in a professional development class. The second level, Weighted PLU Option #2 – Implementation Evidence, allows teachers to provide evidence of implementation evidence their classrooms. The instructions provided by the Professional Learning Department state that each participant must produce evidence of implementation which must include the following three items:

1. Student work reflecting new strategies
2. Implementation observed in observation/walk-throughs
3. Coaching logs/collaboration logs

Each participant is also required to choose at least one other item from the list below as evidence of implementation:

- Teacher lesson plans
- Teacher-made assessments
- Reflective journal
- Completion of model/demonstration lesson
- Checklist/rubric
- Student perception/survey
- Grade level team/vertical team presentation
- Item/error analysis
- Classroom videotaping with self-assessment

The instructors decide the due date for implementation evidence, and they “must give the participants a reasonable length of time” to implement the new strategies in their classrooms.

The individual schools decide whether to participate in this option for professional learning. The school’s professional learning plan is aligned to the needs of the school. Ms. Overton indicated that this option gives schools an “opportunity for assuring implementation of strategies learned in professional learning activities.”

For level three of the options named Alternative Weighted PLU Option: Impact on Student Achievement Evidence, the participants are given a “whole school year to produce evidence of impact on student achievement.” Teachers are required to include samples of student work and may choose from one of the following forms of “measurable data” to submit as evidence:

- Decreased failure rate
- End of Course/Term/Departmental/Nine-Week Tests
- Pre/Post-Tests
- Teacher-made Assessments
- Formative: on-going assessments
- Summative: end assessments (standardized assessments)

- Running Records
- Surveys regarding student perceptions of their learning

This option gives the schools “opportunity to assess the impact on student learning.”

6. Provides professional development that helps support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification. The Mahan School District does provide professional development for teachers who participate in the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP). Ms. Overton explained that each new TAPP teacher is assigned a mentor and participates in the new teacher support program. Mentors are veteran teachers. Ms. Overton said her office assists with any needs the TAPP teachers have concerning their certification. In addition, training in classroom management is provided. Her office works with other administrators to assure the success of these teachers. She said, “It’s pretty much a team effort.”

8/8a. Provides professional development activities that are aligned with and directly related to State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments. According to Ms. Overton, “Mahan’s professional learning activities are aligned to state academic content standards and student achievement and testing.” Ms. Overton had discussed the state’s performance standards in connection with previous definitions of professional development, but Ms. Overton again emphasized the school district’s commitment to adhering to state guidelines and regulations for providing training for the teachers in the new academic content standards. Ms. Overton believes, “This training is very important and that abiding by the state guidelines is necessary.” Ms Overton shared that the veteran teachers participate in all the training. Again, she believes that there is “less resistance” to participation

because the veteran teachers know that professional learning is mandated and “it is not an option.”

10. Provide professional activities that are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments. The Mahan School District has recently added a Spanish course as part of the professional development courses for teachers. Ms. Overton explained, “The Hispanic population is growing especially at certain schools in the district. The professional development is designed to help not only teachers, but all school staff to be able to communicate with both parents and students.”

11. Provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and core academic subjects in which the teachers teach. According to Ms. Overton, the Mahan School District has “extensive training in technology.” She said, “Mahan has a webmaster and technology staff who go to the schools and provide classes on web design.” In addition, the district has several instructional technology coordinators. The technology coordinators support professional development by posting power point presentations on district and school web sites. In collaboration with Ms. Overton, professional development courses are taught by the instructional technology coordinators on how to use United Streaming, Excel, and other software applications in the classroom. Ms. Overton emphasized, “but it is how you can use those to help implement the curriculum in the classroom. So it’s very curriculum, content specific, and it’s not just how do you use Microsoft Word. We are past that.” She believes that the instructional technology courses have been “very beneficial”

to the Mahan School District staff. She said veteran teachers have willingly participated in technology. In speaking about veteran teachers, Ms. Overton leaned forward in her chair and nodded as she elaborated:

I have seen that they have become very - well I hate to say computer literate because it's not all about computers, it's projectors, using DVD's, cameras and things – so they have just become very technologically savvy, if you will. They're not afraid of the computers.

She continued to talk about how popular the technology classes are with veteran teachers. “They want to learn about it.” She explained that the technology courses “fill up quickly.” She said, “As soon as we put them online and we announce to board of education employees that the catalogue will be online at 4 o'clock tomorrow afternoon. They fill up just like that.”

13. Provide instruction and methods of teaching children with special needs. Ms.

Overton shared that she works with the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services and the Director of Student Services to provide specific training for veteran teachers who work with children with special needs. She says this is a “special category” of professional development.

15. Provide instruction in ways that teachers, principals and other personnel can more effectively work with parents. “We do offer that but not in the last two years,” Ms. Overton explained. In the Mahan School District, the recent training has emphasized communication with parents as Ms. Overton pointed out with the following statement:

We've had some training on parent conferencing and what not, but in the context of working with school administrators and parents and school councils. You know the communication of that in terms of how to drive that, how to make the council aware of certain things. Yes, we do that; we've just finished that.

Ms. Overton again explained that there had not been any recent professional development for teachers or other staff in effective communication with parents.

18. Provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in professional development activities to ensure that the teachers have the knowledge and skills and are

implementing those activities in the classroom. Ms. Overton reiterated that there are two options “for the specific purpose of implementing professional learning within the classroom and then them getting credit for it. It’s called the Alternative Weighted PLU Option. There are three different levels to it.” Ms. Overton discussed these previously, but she again wanted to emphasize the importance of these options to ensuring that teachers are implementing strategies they have learned in the training. The learning logs also provide a way for administrators and Ms. Overton to monitor and evaluate the implementation of professional learning strategies.

Closing

In closing, Ms. Overton remarked that it is really “business as usual” in the Mahan School District when it comes to professional development. She explained that teachers are so “ingrained” in the professional development process that “everything runs smoothly in the Mahan School District.”

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of central office administrators responsible for professional development. The research sought to discover what central office administrators were doing to provide veteran teachers with ongoing professional development that meets the mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The study was guided by the following overall research questions:

1. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on the process of developing and implementing the policies and procedures adopted by their school districts to provide ongoing professional learning activities that provide support for veteran teachers to be highly qualified?
2. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on providing veteran teachers with professional development activities which are aligned with the school district's comprehensive improvement plan?
3. What are the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development on implementing changes for veteran teachers in professional development activities as a result of The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?

This chapter presents a summary of the study, a discussion of the findings, and implications and recommendations based on the findings.

Summary of the Study

A qualitative case study approach was used to gain the perspectives of two central office administrators. Two interviews were conducted with two administrators responsible for professional development in two large school systems in middle Georgia. Through case study methodology the researcher conducted an "in-depth exploration" of the phenomena of interest (Creswell, 2002). Since the purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of two central

office administrators responsible for professional development, the case study approach allowed the researcher to examine the perspectives in such a way as to “bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice” (Merriam 1998, p. 41).

In the first interview, the researcher asked questions to elicit the perspectives of the administrators on providing ongoing professional development to veteran teachers in their system. The researcher also collected artifacts and took fieldnotes to gain further understanding and documentation. In the second interview, the researcher asked questions to further clarify the perspectives of the participants and to probe deeper into the ideas that surfaced during the first interview.

Symbolic interactionism allows the researcher to examine phenomena very carefully and to come to an understanding of the participants’ perceptions of their world (Patton, 2002). Since the purpose of this study was to discover the perspectives of administrators on providing professional development to veteran teachers, symbolic interactionism provided the theoretical framework for the study. As the researcher examined and analyzed the data, the researcher used the concepts of symbolic interactionism to guide the analysis of the data.

The findings from the research revealed two common themes relative to the participants’ perspectives on providing veteran teachers with ongoing professional development that meets the mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. For these two participants, the federal policy and guidelines for professional development were only referenced relative to student achievement data related to the school improvement plan and relative to certification. The following two themes emerged from the findings:

- Theme 1: The provision of professional development as mandated in NCLB was driven by student achievement data related to the school improvement plan.

- Theme 2: Relative to highly qualified, the provision of professional development to veteran teachers was related to certification requirements.

A discussion of the findings provided an analysis of the themes and implications for further study.

Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of this section is to discuss the findings in light of the overall themes that emerged. There is no attempt to draw generalizations from the findings, and the reader is reminded that the discussion is based from findings of only two central office administrators for professional development. The following discussion is intended to simply come to a better understanding of the perspectives of central office administrators for professional development in light of the accountability movement of NCLB. A discussion of the themes relative to the literature is included in each section.

Theme 1: *The provision of professional development as mandated in NCLB was driven by student achievement data related to the school improvement plan.*

The data revealed that the needs of the students were the basis for planning and providing professional development. According to Darling-Hammond (1997), the link between teacher quality and student achievement has emerged as a major factor in school improvement. Strahan (2003) reported that school improvement efforts that included professional development models that included follow up after the teachers returned to the classroom were successful. According to Strahan, both the quality of teaching and student achievement improved as a result of this aspect of professional development. While this study was limited to two central office administrators in two large school districts, the results of this study revealed that both school

districts considered follow up in the classroom to be a major component of the professional development activity.

When each participant was asked, “What does No Child Left Behind mean to you relative to highly qualified,” they both emphasized the importance of meeting the needs of the children. Ms. Overton said that it meant “high quality professional learning and ensuring that we have high quality teachers.” She further expressed that the law means “having to ensure that all children are achieving at the rate in which they ought to achieve.” Dr. Duke said the law meant to her “an explicit belief on the part of individuals who develop that law that all children can learn.” She further expressed, “I think that it asks people to share that belief and I think that’s a very important belief.”

Throughout the discussions of high quality and professional development, the goal of meeting the needs of the children surfaced. The academic achievement of the students was driving the professional learning being offered in both of the school systems. When talking about new policies and the professional learning plan for the Mahan School District, Ms. Overton said, “We are focusing on results here, ways that we want children to learn, know, understand, and how to do and to know when they have met that.” Dr. Duke expressed similar beliefs. She said that as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act a decision had to be made by the Delmas School District about whether to move from self-contained classes to departmentalized classes at the elementary level. Teachers with middle grades certification were no longer highly qualified to teach all subjects in the elementary school. Dr. Duke explained that the administrators discussed what they “believed about the best ways that children learn.” The decision was “that they have learned best in the self-contained environment.” As a result, professional development classes

were developed and offered to help teachers become “highly qualified” to teach in a self-contained environment.

In the Mahan School District, looking at data was an important element in the decisions about professional development. Ms. Overton said they looked “at all types of data to determine what our needs were and then plug in the professional learning to address those needs.” She continued to say that the school district used data to “find out why the kids scored what they did and what we need to do to make sure that we have the tools that we need to teach these children to help increase their skills.” Ms. Overton talked about “where our priorities are” in the Mahan School District:

Everything that we do ties back to the mission of the school system that we do for our students – every bit of it – and whenever people submit things to me and say, ‘I want to teach this class; what do you think?’ and I say, ‘Well, first of all, tell me how does this meet the mission of our school system? How is this going to increase the student achievement in this system’ And if it doesn’t, it doesn’t get offered.

Dr. Duke also referred to using data to “drive decisions about professional development.” Dr. Duke referred to the eight step process⁶ used by the Delmas School District as “a fabulous mechanism for strategies for improving student achievement. The eight step process aligns instruction with the data where you can enrich and master areas of weakness.”

Accountability for the academic achievement of children was discussed in relation to professional development. Dr. Duke said that in the Delmas School District “principals are leading the process of planning for professional development in their schools” that meets the needs of their students. She further said, “Because they are leading that process, teachers are realizing that their accountability level is pretty high in terms of meeting the needs of their

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The eight step process refers to the process used by the Delmas School District for strategies to improve student achievement as presented in *Closing the Achievement Gap* by Pat Davenport and Gerald Anderson (2002).

children.” Ms. Overton referred to the need for the school district to be “accountable for the professional development” they provide for their employees. She remarked, “We need accountability on such things as this.”

Prior research asserted that professional development that improves a teacher’s knowledge of the content field and improves the instructional quality of the teacher results in higher student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Smith, Desimone, & Ueno, 2005). Data revealed that both school districts prioritize student outcomes and that professional development was built around the needs of the students. Monitoring and feedback on implementation of strategies was a part of the professional development in both school districts. According to Darling-Hammond (1999), the quality of teaching can be improved through professional development if the professional development centers on content knowledge and instructional methodology (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Both districts put importance on their visions and beliefs that all professional development should be high quality.

Data revealed that changes in professional development in both districts were a result of efforts to achieve school improvement. According to Harris (2002b), “Over the past thirty years the school improvement research field has become a powerful influence in both educational policy and practice” (p. 6). Data revealed that changed in both policies and procedures occurred as a result of NCLB professional development guidelines. For example, both participants emphasized that professional development activities must be related to school and/or district improvement goals. In addition, professional development in both districts must be research based, ongoing and related to the content area of the teachers. Both participants said they deny requests for professional development that does not meet the criteria. Professional development may even begin in a conference or workshop setting, but it ends in implementation in the

classroom. The follow-up and evaluation is a very important component of the professional development goal. According to both Dr. Duke and Ms. Overton, prior to the changes in professional development, attendance at a workshop or conference might have been the only requirement to earn credit for the staff development activity. Although in the past teachers could often choose what they wanted to take without considering the goals of the school or the needs of the students, now they have to participate in activities that affect more than just themselves.

Professional development in both districts was considered to be mandatory and not optional. The districts approached the requirements for professional development through slightly different avenues, but the result was the same. The Mahan School District had an official board policy outlining the requirements for participation in professional development. The Delmas School District required participation through procedures and an individual learning plan. Both participants expressed that their teachers understood that they must participate in professional development and that this was part of their job. Ms. Overton expressed that veteran teachers were “ingrained” in the policy requirements of the Mahan School District and therefore were less resistant because they knew it was required. Dr. Duke said that their staff “knows that this is a mandate that they must meet” and this has minimized resistance. She said, “We are going to develop a policy, but only once we know that we need to be that restrictive.”

Stronger than policies and procedures enacted as a result of NCLB, both participants spent considerable time sharing about the importance of professional development to teacher effectiveness in their respective school districts. Beliefs were more of a motivation to make changes than the language and tone of NCLB. The findings of the research revealed that the two participants were in agreement on what constituted high quality professional development and the importance of providing high quality professional development to the teachers in their

districts. Both participants believed that their districts were complying with NCLB. Dr. Duke in the Delmas School District expressed more frustration with the implementation of the professional development procedures to meet the demands of NCLB than did Ms. Overton from the Mahan School District. Both participants believed that the efforts in their districts to meet with teachers and explain the new procedures helped teachers as they began the changes in professional development.

Both participants believed that their school districts were providing high quality professional development that meets the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act. Dr. Duke in the Delmas School District credited the superintendent of the school district with being the driving force behind high quality professional development. Dr. Duke gave credit to the superintendent for having the vision of “improving student achievement by improving teacher effectiveness.” Dr. Duke considered it to be a “great fortune” to have a superintendent who “is a major proponent of professional development and understands that you don’t change teacher behavior practice with a one shot event.”

Ms. Overton in the Mahan School District credited the school board with being the driving force behind the high quality professional development. Ms. Overton in the Mahan School District believed that the board policy requiring annual professional development for each teacher showed the commitment of the school district to professional development. She said that “the board felt that the professional learning of our employees was essential and it is. It is essential to see achievement in their professional growth.” The priorities of the school district were expressed in the Professional Learning Handbook and were clearly a part of the expectations of the school district. Although they both discussed the participation of central office administrators, principals, instructional coordinators, and teachers in decision making for

professional development, both Dr. Duke and Ms. Overton referred to the visions and beliefs of the heads of their school district as the impetus in providing high quality professional development.

Both participants believed that the professional development provided in their respective school districts met the No Child Left Behind definition of being “high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher’s performance in the classroom.” Ms. Overton said that in the Mahan School District all professional learning adheres to the 12 standards of the National Staff Development Council. Ms. Overton believes very strongly in the standards. Dr. Duke indicated that in the Delmas School District, the district initiatives for professional development include professional development that is research based and includes a plan for follow up at the classroom levels. Dr. Duke continued, “All of those initiatives have a great deal of follow-up and follow through and monitoring to ensure the implementation.”

Professional learning guidelines and mandates from the state were also a driving force in the process of providing high quality professional development. Both participants discussed the state’s role in professional development. Ms. Overton said that the state and the Mahan School District adhere to the National Staff Development Council’s twelve standards for professional development. Ms. Overton reiterated, “Well, the NSDC developed the twelve standards and the state of Georgia adopted those twelve standards and they entitled them Georgia’s Professional Learning Standards. So, we have adopted them.” Dr. Duke expressed, “I think Georgia in general in relation to professional development has done really well in capitalizing on what the state or the nation and the NSDC organization wants professional development to be.” She said that “even the name was involved in all the changes.” What was called staff development

became professional learning. Dr. Duke believed that she saw the movement from staff development “more and more moving toward being the standards toward the national model of professional development.” Dr. Duke and Ms. Overton believe the state supports high quality professional development. Dr. Duke made the statement, “So, I’m feeling very fortunate to be here in this state.”

Both participants believed that the move toward high quality professional development began before the final enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act. Ms. Overton said, “I think the movement was underway at the same time if you will, because we realized there was a problem.” She went on to explain that teachers were “getting credit for things that had nothing to do with what was going to help the children achieve in the classroom. Something had to be done and I think the movement was underway.” Ms. Overton said that staff development was cut by a third in the state, and she called that “the impetus in the State.” She explained that the “State Legislation cut the funds because you had people going to London for a week for the London Flower Show and using professional learning and making it a professional learning experience.”

Dr. Duke said that even before No Child Left Behind, the superintendent of the Delmas School District began to “challenge” her to “look beyond the workshop and even into different types of models of staff development. So at that point I began to do a lot of investigating into the different ways that you could deliver information to teachers.”

Theme 2: *Relative to highly qualified, the provision of professional development to veteran teachers was related to certification requirements.*

For both school districts, the perspectives of the central office administrators for professional development revealed that the provision of ongoing professional development to veteran teachers was really no different than the provision of professional development for all

teachers. However, relative to meeting the requirements of NCLB that all teachers be highly qualified, both school districts provided professional development assistance for veteran teachers to become state certified in the content areas in which they were teaching.

Although both participants believed professional development should be high quality, when referring to the term “highly qualified,” both participants talked about teacher certification. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 required that to be highly qualified teachers must have a bachelor’s degree, be certified in the field in which they are teaching, and pass a content-area test in that field. The findings revealed that in both districts, there were veteran teachers who needed to become highly qualified in their fields and to obtain certification through professional development courses, college courses, or through passing the state approved tests in a content area. Again both school districts equated highly qualified to certification. There were two groups of teachers who were impacted more than others by the mandate of NCLB. Those two groups were teachers who were certified in Middle Grades and teachers who were certified in Special Education. Middle Grades teachers were required to be certified in each content field they teach. For Middle Grades certified teachers who were teaching in grades four or five, this meant adding content area certification if they were going to remain in self-contained classrooms at this level. Smith et al. (2005) and Frome et al. (2005) found that quality effective teaching cannot be based on content knowledge alone. However, relative to meeting the needs of veteran teachers, both participants primarily discussed “quality” in light of certification requirements.

Relative to highly qualified, the data revealed that both participants recognized the effects of the changes brought about by NCLB on the veteran teachers. They both shared their perspectives on helping these teachers become highly qualified, and both discussed the adjustment for them and for the teachers to the changes mandated by NCLB. However, neither

participant referred to giving consideration to the career stages of teachers in planning professional development. Neither participant referred to planning professional development activities specifically targeted toward veteran teachers; the planning was based solely on “what’s required to get our teachers certified,” said one of the participants. Although both participants discussed the frustration of veteran teachers in adjusting to the changes brought about by the law, neither discussed strategies specifically designed to help veteran teachers. Arnau (2001) suggested that “peer coaching as a form of mentoring can help to revitalize veteran teachers while improving teaching and learning” (p. 3).

Data revealed that some veteran teachers who needed to participate in professional development to become highly qualified in their content areas resisted the mandates. They questioned how they could be considered not qualified when they had been teaching so many years and receiving satisfactory evaluations. Ms. Overton said that she received calls from teachers complaining that they were required to participate in professional development or take a test to be highly qualified. For instance, one teacher called and asked, “Well, you mean to tell me that I’ve taught for 15 years and now they are saying that I’m not qualified?” Dr. Duke also encountered the same attitude as teachers participated in professional development classes in order to become highly qualified. Referring to the professional development classes, she said “they resisted that, but what we tried to do was to really ensure them that it was going to be quality stuff.” Dr. Duke said that the teachers believed that the only reason they were in the class was to become highly qualified, and they did not believe there was any other purpose.

Both participants discussed the change in the meaning of professional development as a means to effect change. For veteran teachers, not only did the process change for professional development, but also the types of activities. The 12 standards adopted by the state support

activities that are collaborative and team oriented. For instance, the learning communities format is used at both districts and involves “teachers working with other teachers for a common cause,” according to Ms. Overton. The site-based, team approach is used in both districts.

From a district-wide perspective, professional development was once viewed primarily as a means to renew a teaching certificate and, as such, was not necessarily related to school improvement or to classroom instruction. The shift in professional development in both school districts began prior to the No Child Left Behind Act. However, the NCLB Act made a practice a law. Both participants expressed that veteran teachers were slow to believe that collaborative professional development would make any difference in the classroom.

Although in both districts, professional development was provided to help teachers achieve the highly qualified status in their certification, the two participants indicated that their main emphasis for professional development for all teachers was to provide opportunities for ongoing activities that improved the quality of all teachers, regardless of their certification status. The certification status of highly qualified alone did not qualify a teacher to be exempt from professional development. Professional development was an evolving process of assessment and training to be constantly addressing the needs of students and improving instruction.

Importantly, in both school districts, both participants believed that as teachers put into practice the strategies they learned in professional development and saw positive results in the classrooms, the resistance subsided. Dr. Duke was optimistic and said, “The first thing you do is change teacher practice..... and once they see the results and once they see that students can learn, and then they will change their beliefs.” Ms. Overton, on the other hand, held the belief in her district that the policies and mandates for teacher job security helped to drive compliance with the provision of state and federal mandates.

Implications

Implications for further research

Although this study considered the perspectives of central office administrators on providing veteran teachers with professional development, the study only considered the perspectives of two administrators in two large school districts. A study that considers the perspectives of central administrators for professional development in smaller school districts might reveal different viewpoints. Would central office administrators in a smaller district be more familiar with veteran teachers on a personal basis? Would this influence policy making and the implementation of policy and procedures?

Another consideration for smaller school districts would be the availability of resources for providing high quality professional development. In the present study, the central office administrators in both districts kept abreast of the research on professional development in part through traveling to conferences across the state and nation. Would the role of the central office administrators in smaller school districts be different than the role of those in larger districts?

Another perspective that might be explored through further research might be the impact on the provision of quality professional development of having formal policies and mandated implementation versus not having these. In the present study, both school districts had implementation processes in place which mandated participation in professional development. Mahan School District used board policy to drive this mandate. Although Delmas School District did not have a formal board policy, participation in professional development was mandated as a part of employment with the district.

Finally, additional insight might be gained from studying the perspectives of veteran teachers to gain their insights about professional development. Would teachers tell a different

story about the relationship of being highly qualified and the mandates of NCLB and its relationship to learning?

Implications for practitioners

In the present study, the data revealed that the central office administrators were knowledgeable of the research on high quality professional development. They had knowledge of state and federal laws on professional development. The professional development programs in their school districts reflected this knowledge. Although this study considered the perspectives of only two administrators, this knowledge seemed to impact their beliefs and decisions. Practitioners in the field of professional development might benefit from understanding the importance of being knowledgeable of up-to-date effective professional development practices. In addition, in the present study the central office administrators involved a team of administrators in planning professional development activities.

Data revealed that veteran teachers resisted change and sometimes felt that the message of change was that they were not doing a good job. Practitioners in the field of professional development at the local district level might benefit from the data in this study revealing the beliefs of the two participants concerning this issue. School based decisions on professional development activities allow for participation of veteran teachers in decision making at that level. Alvy (2005) suggested that veteran teachers contribute wisdom and “hard-won” experience to the teaching community, and that school administrative personnel should collaborate with veteran teachers on professional development activities. In the present study, the participants believed that collaboration in professional development was occurring with all teachers.

Implications for policy makers

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires states and local school districts to be responsible for providing all students with high quality teachers and a quality education. The states had to approve laws and policies that would bring them into compliance with the intent of these provisions. In turn, some states required local districts to pass policies to support compliance with the NCLB law. Turchi et al. (2002) found that student achievement in low performing schools increased to a greater degree in school districts that had more controls on professional development.

In this study, both school districts had controls in place, although one district's controls were not in the form of official policies. The data revealed that policy and mandates were important to the actual planning and implementation of professional development in the two local school districts. In response to NCLB, the state of Georgia mandated changes in professional development through policy. In planning for professional development that meets the mandates of NCLB, other states might consider the results of this state's policy decisions relative to professional development. However, whether these two districts gained positive results from such policies was beyond the scope of this study.

Implications for those who prepare administrators for central office administration

As school districts, universities, and educational agencies prepare for training educators for central office administration, consideration might be given to the complex issue of delivering professional development per state and federal legislation. Although this study was based on the data from only two central office administrators, both administrators expressed frustration centered on the changes in state and federal legislation. In this study, there was a resistance to change among veteran teachers, which was considered problematic by the central office

administrators. Carney (2003) found that resistance to training on the part of experienced teachers resulted in less benefit for this targeted population of teachers.

Concluding Thoughts

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of two central office administrators who oversee professional development in their districts. Through the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism the researcher sought to discover their perspectives. The intent of the study was to bring to light the processes involved in providing professional development to veteran teachers that meets the mandates of NCLB. The study revealed that the two administrators believed that their school districts were providing high quality professional development and that their teachers were highly qualified. The school districts were following the guidelines for high quality professional development as specified in the NSDC's standards and as mandated in NCLB. The data also revealed that the effort to continue to have highly qualified teachers was ongoing. The provision of professional development was accomplished in collaboration with other administrators and was a changing process that required evaluation and planning at all levels.

Relative to veteran teachers, the study revealed that there was really no difference in the professional development provided to veteran teachers as opposed to other teachers. The central office administrators met with resistance to change and that was frustrating to both participants. However, they both believed the resistance from veteran teachers was not as great as one might have thought because of the leverage of complying for continued teacher employment.

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