Professional Grow Plans and Teacher Learning

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Author’s Note

Denise Spencer-Dahl serves as co-chair of the District 69 (Qualicum) Professional Development Committee which is an elected union position.

The views in this assignment are in development and represent solely the author’s opinion.

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Teacher self-efficacy beliefs and shared and supportive leadership practices were quantified in this study and correlated with attitudes towards the purpose of Professional Growth Plans. A paper based survey instrument was used to collect the data from participating teachers employed in School District 69 (Qualicum). Two hundred teachers were invited to be part of the study of which 88 participants completed the survey. It was hypothesized that teacher self-efficacy and perceived shared and supportive leadership behaviours would impact a teacher’s attitude towards adopting a Professional Grow Plan as a tool for student and teacher learning. This study found no correlations existed between teacher self-efficacy and perceived shared and supportive leadership practices. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the teachers’ beliefs about the proposed purpose of Professional Grow Plans indicated that they should be personal in nature and not be required to align with school, district or Ministry goals. There was a bimodal distribution of whether Professional Grow Plans should be used as a component of teacher evaluations. Further research is needed to determine if Professional Grow Plans should be pursued as a framework to guide funding and future professional development initiatives in School District 69 (Qualicum).
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Chapter 1

Introduction

According to the former Honourable George Abbott, the Minister of Education in British Columbia (at time of writing, March 2013), the purpose of current teacher evaluations is to determine if teachers have the skills to advance student achievement, as measured by standardized tests, based on instructional practices (Steffenhagen, 2011). The definition of professional development according to the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) is “a process of ongoing growth, through involvement in programs, services, and activities designed to enable teachers, both individually and collectively, to enhance professional practice” (Members’ Guide to the BCTF, 2011, p. 128). Although teacher evaluations and professional development have similar goals – the enhancement of teacher effectiveness and therefore student learning – there is a methodological disconnect between teacher evaluations and professional development in how best to achieve that shared goal. The current mode of teacher evaluations may not do much to support teacher effectiveness except in the most extreme cases where dismissal is considered but rarely implemented (Menuey, 2007).

In School District 69, where the current study took place, the present method of evaluating teachers is primarily summative. The evaluation system provides an evaluator with an option rating a teacher’s performance as either satisfactory or dissatisfactory in the following categories: knowledge of subject matter, preparation and planning, instructional skills, classroom management and professional relationships, student achievement and management of records (See Appendix A for current evaluation guidelines). The outcome is a determination if the teacher is “satisfactory” (or not).
The dominant criticisms of current teacher evaluation methods, such as the current model utilized by School District 69 (Qualicum), include that the evaluation is impersonal and does not provide meaningful support or recommendations for teachers who have already demonstrated competency and wish to advance their practice beyond merely “satisfactory”. (Aseltine, Faryniarz, & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2006). That is, the evaluations are too impersonal to facilitate meaningful professional development. A teacher is either “satisfactory” or not: there is little to no additional guidance on performance. The current level of mastery that the binary evaluation system measures does not meaningfully differentiate among teachers with their varying abilities to affect student achievement.

The apparent limitations of the teacher evaluation process are not unique to School District 69. Weisberg’s (2009) multi-centre study in the United States in four states and districts indicates that teacher evaluation touched on professional development in only one district. Overall, Weisberg concludes:

The failure to address variations in instructional effectiveness also precludes districts from identifying specific development needs in their teachers. In fact, 73 percent of teachers surveyed said their most recent evaluation did not identify any development areas, and only 45 percent of teachers who did have development areas identified said they received useful support to improve. (p.6)

In addition to the failure of many evaluation processes to consider professional development as one of the key matrices, there is no standard model for evaluating teacher effectiveness. R. Lemons (2008) describes a study involving administrators’ assessment of teacher effectiveness on viewing a standardized video-taped lesson. In this exercise there was no agreement among the evaluators as to the teacher’s effectiveness. If educators are
ineffective in accurately assessing and evaluating teacher effectiveness then it stands to reason that other parameters that show a positive relationship with student achievement should be explored as a method of promoting professional growth (Grierson, 2011).

The purpose of this study was two-fold: first, to explore teachers’ attitudes toward the purpose of Professional Grow Plans (PGPs) and second, how Professional Grow Plans could complement the current teacher evaluation model in School District 69 (Qualicum). According to Antosz (as cited in Edgar, the current model of teacher evaluations in British Columbia is primarily summative. That is, ongoing formative assessment of teaching practices as supported by Professional Grow Plans do not fit within the confines of the current collective agreement in School District 69 (see Appendix A for current evaluation guidelines). In contrast, Professional Grow Plans foster reflective teaching practices that allow for teacher initiated professional growth (Duke, 1990). The reported benefits of Professional Grow Plans are a greater teacher commitment to their own professional development and an increase in self-efficacy (Fenwick, 2004). These benefits have important implications as teacher commitment is related to student academic achievement (Kushman, 1992). Further, in an effort to move teaching professionals beyond merely “satisfactory” teaching, my thesis is that the development of self-efficacy should become a central consideration in the design and development of teacher learning. I expect the results will be in line with current research on teacher self-efficacy and teacher learning as reflected in the National Staff Development Standards which implicitly promote the value of self-efficacy as an important variable in teacher effectiveness (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003).
The relationship between teacher self-efficacy and professional autonomy is hypothesized to be central in promoting better learning outcomes for students. Leadership practices impact self-efficacy beliefs in teachers (Harris & Muijs, 2003). In the current study, leaders who ascribe to a shared and supportive leadership style were hypothesized to create conditions in which teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs were more likely to create Professional Grow Plans that reflect the collective goals of the school system.

The current language surrounding professional autonomy in the collective agreement between The Mount Arrowsmith Teachers’ Association (MATA) and The Board of Education of School District 69 (Qualicum) has been interpreted by some teachers and administrators to read as if it is somehow inappropriate for administrators (or indeed the evaluation process) to assist teachers in achieving their professional development goals. However, we know that professional development positively impacts teacher efficacy (Karimi 2001).

The goal of teacher evaluations and the District Professional Development Committee is to facilitate and support a teacher’s professional growth. Where evaluation alone falls short due to current collective agreement language constraints, Professional Grow Plans that link professional learning goals to professional development hold promise. This is because growth plans support reflective and job embedded professional development that can impact student and teacher learning. Adopting a growth model for teacher learning, such as Professional Grow Plans, honours professional autonomy and adds value to individual teaching goals. Just as we value what we measure, we measure what we value (Sergiovanni, 1984).
The author of this study is the co-chair of the In-District Professional Development Committee in School District 69. As such, she has both experience and a vested interest in professional development policy as it relates to educational reform.

The current In-District Professional Development Committee in School District 69 is committed to promoting a teacher inquiry model rather than a consumer model of professional development (L. Rowan, personal communications, February 23, 2012). Although the In-District Professional Development Committee does not recommend involuntary Professional Grow Plans (PGPs), my thesis is that voluntary Professional Grow Plans, including an investigation of teacher attitudes towards Professional Grow Plans and the optimal conditions in which they could be used would benefit School District 69 teachers and their students.

Justification of the study

Professional development, personal growth plans and teacher evaluation are currently contentious bargaining issues between the BCTF and the Ministry of Education. Both parties place a high value in controlling the direction of future professional development initiatives and policies (as well as the funding for these endeavours). This is evident by the Ministry funded inquiry project on “supervision for learning” that has a high profile on the Principals’ and Vice Principals’ Association’s website (http://www.bcpvpa.bc.ca/node/95; accessed February 21, 2012).

We can learn from other provinces’ experiences with Professional Grow Plans. For example, in Alberta, all teachers are required to create and maintain a Professional Grow Plan to facilitate teacher learning but they are not used for evaluative purposes. This model stems from a growth rather than a deficit model that encourages teachers to
take risks and accurately identify areas where context specific, self-identified growth is desired. A study by Fenwick (2004) indicated that personal Professional Grow Plans were most valuable in a school setting where reflective teaching practices were encouraged by time, support, flexibility, and resources. The same study also illustrated that personal growth plans presented challenges in that they were time consuming, not always flexible in learning goals and it was difficult to assess objectively whether teachers’ learning goals were authentic. Fenwick (2004) identified that there was an actual and perceived risk in identifying areas for growth within one’s teaching practice. The issue of trust and risk between teachers and their administrators cannot be underestimated if growth plans are to become an alternative or complementary process to traditional teacher evaluations. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) have expressed concern that punitive evaluation systems do not promote risk taking and may, “hold back the excellence of many as they become reluctant to take risks for fear of punishment” (p.10).

   In order for personal growth plans to be useful they need to be authentic and valued by teachers as part of their professional autonomy and personal growth. Professional Grow Plans cannot be used as a deficit model of teacher evaluation. Where satisfactory professional competence is of concern, other evaluation models that offer increased support or guidance may be more effective.

   This research investigated whether self-efficacy and shared and supportive leadership practices were correlated and whether either variable was associated with

   a) a common attitude towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans amongst School District 69 teachers; and
b) a desire amongst School District 69 teachers to have Professional Grow Plans included as part of the teacher evaluation process.

**Research Question and Hypothesis**

The primary question that this study sought to investigate was how are teacher self-efficacy as well as shared and supportive leadership practices correlated with one another in School District 69 (Qualicum)? A corollary question was whether teacher-efficacy and/or shared and supportive leadership practices correlated with a particular attitude towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans. That is, should professional development goals be individual, school or district based and should they be part of the current teacher evaluation process in School District 69 (Qualicum)?

Professional Grow Plans offer teachers the opportunity to develop, shape and grow collective school goals both personally and within the District in a more participatory way. The hypothesis of the author was that a teacher’s self-efficacy rating would be predictive of his/her attitude towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans. Further, I expected to find a positive correlation between teacher self-efficacy and shared and supported leadership practices within a school.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms have been defined in order to offer consistent understanding throughout this study.

“Teacher Self-Efficacy” was defined in this study as a teacher’s subjective belief in his or her own competence (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). It was quantified by a modified version of the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale developed by Anita Woolfolk Hoy and Megan Tschannen-Moran (2001).
“Professional Grow Plans” were defined as a theoretical document authorized annually by individual teachers that is fluid, reflective and addresses emergent teacher and school initiated goals throughout the year. The framework from the Alberta Teachers’ Association is suggested as a template (http://www.teachers.ab.ca/For%20Members/Professional%20Development/Professional%20Growth%20Plans/Section%203/Pages/Section%203-Develop%20a%20Professional%20Growth%20Plan.aspx; accessed January 24, 2012).

“Attitudes” towards Professional Grow Plans was defined as either agreeing or disagreeing that Professional Grow Plan goals should be aligned with external education goals at the school, district or Ministry level as well as determining if there was a favourable response to using Professional Grow Plans as a component of the teacher evaluation system..

“Traditional Teacher Evaluation was defined by Article E.24 in the working document, Collective Agreement between BCPSEA and the Mount Arrowsmith Teachers’ Association, as set out in Appendix “A”.

“Teacher” was defined as a teacher who has a valid British Columbia teaching certificate and was employed during the study as a teacher within School District 69 (Qualicum).

“Job-embedded teacher learning” was defined as professional development that is grounded in day-to-day teaching with the intent of improving student learning.

“Professional Development” was defined as “a process of ongoing growth, through involvement in programs, services, and activities designed to enable teachers,
both individually and collectively, to enhance professional practice” (Members’ Guide to the BCTF, 2011, p. 128).

“Professional Learning Community” (PLC) refers to groups of educators who are committed to working and learning collaboratively to promote both teacher and student learning.

Supportive Leadership was defined as the dimension of a PLC where trust is developed between teachers and administrators (Hord, 2004).

Shared Leadership was defined as mobilizing leadership at all levels in the organisation not just relying on leadership from the top (Harris, 2010).

**Brief overview of study**

This study was conducted utilizing a quantitative approach to inquiry. In order to answer the research questions, teachers employed in School District 69 (Qualicum) for the 2012-2013 school-year were offered the opportunity to complete a paper based survey distributed by professional development school representatives at the school based Professional Development day on October 1, 2012. Attendance is mandatory at school based Professional Development days for all teachers on contract so this day was chosen to maximize opportunity for participation. The cross-sectional survey consisted of the adapted short version of the teacher self-efficacy scale (TSES) as developed by Anita Woolfolk Hoy and Megan Tschannen-Moran (2001), an adapted portion of the Professional Learning Communities Assessment-Revised (PLCA-R) instrument (2010) that explores shared and supportive leadership practices, as well as one open ended and four closed ended questions designed to illicit the respondent teacher’s attitudes towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans.
A correlation of data from the adapted PLCA-R and the adapted TSES survey instrument was done to identify if a relationship existed using the Pearson correlation statistic. The results of these two surveys were then individually correlated with the responses to the closed ended questions about the respondents’ attitudes towards Professional Grow Plans. The open ended question was analysed by grouping responses into emergent themes.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Review of the Literature

This research investigated:

a) whether teacher self-efficacy was associated with shared and supportive leadership practices within District 69 (Qualicum);

b) whether self-efficacy or shared and supportive leadership practices were associated with a common attitude towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans; and

c) whether teachers believed Professional Grow Plans should part of the teacher evaluation model in School District 69 (Qualicum)

The review of the literature is divided into three sections that look at best practices in professional development, teacher self-efficacy (TSE), and the role of shared and supportive leadership practices to support both teacher and student learning.

Best Practices in Professional Development

Professional Development (PD) is the meaningful pursuit of knowledge that leads to an enhancement of skills necessary to advance one’s teaching practice to facilitate student learning. Although teacher evaluations and professional development appear to have a common goal of supporting teacher and student learning, there is an important distinction between the two. Teacher evaluations establish competency while professional development facilitates continued growth so that competency is maintained and teaching practices evolve. Promoting growth versus establishing competency ascribes to Duke’s (1990) notion that there should be a complete separation of growth-orientated and accountability-based teacher evaluations practices. If learning is the goal
then any policies that look to improve both teacher and student learning should be, constructive and encouraging, rather than destructive and discouraging (Spears, 1953). This statement cannot be underestimated if a system utilizing Professional Grow Plans for teacher and student learning is to be adopted in School District 69.

Research on professional development has indicated that in order to be effective, professional development must be designed around meaningful learning activities that are job-embedded and on-going (Nicolaidou & Petridou, 2011). Guskey’s (2000) survey of the literature surrounding effective professional development concurred. Guskey (2000) suggested that in order for professional development to be effective it needs to be an intentional process that is ongoing and systematic in its delivery. Professional Grow Plans ascribe to this model.

In a longitudinal study by Doherty (2011), the impact of professional development workshops was studied to determine to what degree, if any, teachers implement what they have learned from a workshop into their practice. Doherty examined whether implementation is related to a teacher’s perceived value of the professional development workshop. Over a three year period, Doherty conducted ten professional development workshops on using Web 2.0 applications in the classroom.

Doherty found that the perceived value of a workshop was independent of implementation and that overall implementation rates were low (less than ten percent). Joyce and Showers (2002) also found that isolated professional development activities such as workshops have less than a five percent chance of being implemented by a teacher that has received the training. This statistic is further substantiated by Haley and Valli (2009) who found that consumer model approaches to professional development,
such as one-time workshops, typically do not lead to a significant change in teaching methodologies. These findings as well as studies by Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995; Senge, 1990 suggest that another mode of professional development should be explored.

Professional Grow Plans as a framework for professional development could be a viable option to marry professional learning with realized efficacy or implementation. This is because Professional Growth Plans are both personal and job embedded. Leithwood (1990) suggested that teachers at different stages in their careers have different professional development needs. Leithwood proposed that the progression of desired professional development opportunities goes from survival skills (e.g., classroom management), to common instructional practices, to innovative instructional practices, to critical reflection about one’s teaching practices. Leithwood (1990) indicated that the timeline that teachers pass through these stages is not a linear progression and that professional development activities should reflect this desired pattern of growth over a teacher’s career.

In a study conducted by Liu (2009) action research was studied to determine if it had an impact on teacher self-efficacy. Action research enables a teacher to reflect upon their own teaching practice from a researcher’s point of view. The parallel between action research and Professional Grow Plans are that they are both founded in reflective teaching practices that look to measure progress through critical analysis of growth brought on by changes in instructional practices. Lui (2009) found that research based professional development, such as action research, was positively correlated with increased teacher self-efficacy. This research adds to the body of evidence that best
practices in professional development should not be passive in design (e.g., workshop attendance). Professional Grow Plans are inquiry based and active as they set out to critically reflect on an aspect of one’s teaching and finding new ways to achieve a teacher’s Professional Grow Plan goals.

Best practices for professional development indicate that Professional Grow Plans have the potential to be individual, ongoing and job-embedded. Fenwick (2004) provided a critical analysis of the implementation of Professional Grow Plans in Alberta and suggested that teachers there saw Professional Grow Plans as beneficial to teacher learning as long as trust amongst stakeholders was sufficient to elicit meaningful, authentic goals. Fenwick concluded that teachers were actively engaged in the process of setting personal learning goals and that many “began to see a general cultural shift in conversation and activity to emphasize teacher learning” within their school setting (p.15).

The notion that effective professional development needs to be examined within the school setting has been further substantiated by Garet et al. (2001). This body of literature stands for the proposition that effective teacher learning (or professional development) needs to be continuing, active, social and related to one’s practice. Professional Development encourages teachers to implement new instructional ideas (Allinder, 1994). Professional Grow Plans create the framework that enable teachers to make new instructional practices routine so that they become common practice.

DuFour’s (1991) analysis of empirical studies concerning professional development activities and implementation of new learning concluded that “teachers must utilize a new skill twenty to thirty times before they have sufficient mastery to
incorporate it within their teaching repertoire, utilize it comfortably, and adapt it to the needs of their students” (p. 58). The model that Professional Grow Plans ascribe to is the “individually guided model” (Guskey, 2000). The individually guided model is based on teacher inquiry that encourages a teacher to pursue knowledge relevant to both student and teacher learning goals in their current work context. This model is supported by research done by Timperley (2011) concerning an inquiry framework that supports professional learning.

Timperley (2011) proposed that a series of questions be used to provide a framework to facilitate teacher and student learning. These questions center upon not what students know and can do but “how well they have been taught” (p. 16). To answer Timperley’s questions, teachers need to understand their students’ learning needs and how their assessment practices must be linked to their professional learning goals. This model encourages teachers to pursue professional learning goals that are directly linked to student learning. This inquiry framework moves beyond teacher competency to a system that celebrates a growth mindset with respect to learning. Timperley’s work compliments the spirit of Professional Growth Plans as it advocates for job embedded, continuous learning that is meaningful for both students and teachers.

In School District 69 the current collective agreement gives a high level of professional autonomy to teachers in both the direction of and participation in professional development activities. Although professional autonomy must be honoured (for collective agreement purposes if not other policy reasons), not having a system in place that facilitates collaborative teaching and learning tends to encourage solitary teaching practices. The research around professional development suggests that isolated
teaching practices do not support a professional learning community or individual teacher development in a meaningful way (Lieberman, 1985).

Guskey (2000) proposed four principles that should guide successful professional development initiatives. These four principles could be used as a starting framework for Professional Grow Plans in School District 69. The first principle is that there must be a clear focus on learning and learners that is mindful of the current educational context in which goals are set. The second principle is that both individual and collective change needs to be assessed in a systematic way so that growth over time can guide further learning. Third, professional development goals should be achievable and created with a collective vision in mind (e.g., the professional learning community of the school and the District). Lastly, professional development should be a sustained effort that is embedded in practice.

Research by Hirsh (2009) indicated that best practices in professional development call for educators to engage in professional learning at the school as part of the workday. This statement supports Professional Grow Plans as they are context specific, on-going and are designed to promote reflective teaching practices that aim to use evidence-based strategies to improve student achievement.

**Teacher Self Efficacy**

Recent research on self-efficacy and how it relates to teacher effectiveness indicates that professional development growth plans warrant further investigation (Fenwick, 2004). For the purposes of this research, the concept of self-efficacy, a term used in educational psychology, is a teacher’s belief in his or her own competence (Bray-
Clark & Bates, 2003). Effectiveness, on the other hand, relates to observable outcomes, in this case teacher effectiveness as it translates into student achievement.

Three beliefs inform a teacher’s self-efficacy: motivation, confidence and self-knowledge (Bandura, 1991; Bray-Clark 2003). These beliefs form a self-fulfilling prophecy of teacher competence and the instructional practices they promote in order to achieve student learning (Bandura, 1997; Penderga et al., 2011). Although there is not a direct link between a teacher’s self-efficacy and student achievement, there is a direct link between self-efficacy and teacher effectiveness and teacher’s effectiveness has been shown to mediate student achievement (Heneman, 2006). According to Ashton (1984), “teachers with a high sense of efficacy plan for student learning, set goals for themselves and their students, and identify strategies to achieve them” (p.29).

Further research by Woolfolk Hoy (2000) has suggested that high teacher self-efficacy is associated with teacher determination, commitment and a willingness to explore and adopt new teaching techniques. These factors have important implications for struggling students as teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in alternative and innovative teaching practices.

Research by Karimi (2011) has suggested that professional development has the ability to impact a teacher’s self-efficacy. A quantitative study conducted by Karimi (2011) involving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers examined the role of professional development on self-efficacy scores as measured by the survey instrument known as “Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale”. A pre-test of teacher self-efficacy indicated that there was no difference between the control and the experimental group prior to the intervention. The experimental group were provided with on-going, job embedded
professional development opportunities that represented a variety of different professional development models (e.g. mentoring, peer observation). After participating in a variety of professional development opportunities the experimental group showed a significantly higher efficacy score than those in the control group. Furthermore, in a delayed post-test that was administered three months after the intervention the increase in teacher self-efficacy scores in the experimental group persisted. This study has important implications for professional development policy as it supports the notion that sustained and focussed professional development that Professional Grow Plans promote can increase a teacher’s self-efficacy and therefore their performance as it relates to student learning.

Bandura (1997) has hypothesized that teacher self-efficacy is context specific and leadership practices are an important factor in teacher and student learning. A shared and supportive leadership model is one that promotes collaboration and responsibility amongst stakeholders. Its foundations are based within the construct of Professional Learning Communities. The current study adds to the literature concerning the purpose of Personal Growth Plans as it relates to either an individualist or shared vision and if this is correlated with a teacher’s self-efficacy. To this author’s knowledge there is no previous research on self-efficacy and the perceived purpose of Professional Grow Plans.

Leadership behaviours are not equal in how they impact teacher self-efficacy beliefs if one differentiates between years of teaching experience (Walker and Slear, 2011). A study done by Walker and Slear (2011) indicates that principals should be cognizant of teaching experience amongst their staff so that their behaviours maximize teacher self-efficacy. That is, the behaviours most beneficial to a new teacher’s increased efficacy are
ones that support creating mastery experiences (either actual or vicarious through observation of master teachers). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) found that teachers that have a greater number of mastery experiences tend to have more stable sense of self-efficacy. Given that stress and uncertainty impact teacher self-efficacy beliefs (Schwazer & Hallum, 2008), teachers that are new to a grade level, curricular area or school have the added stress of not having mastery experiences in their given context and subsequently may have vulnerable self-efficacy beliefs. Klassen and Chiu (2010), substantiate the construct of “experience” by defining teacher experience as being a combined function of years of teaching experience, in a particular school at a particular grade.

School District 69 has experienced declining enrollment for several years. One result of these changing demographics is that many teachers are teaching in new schools, curricular areas and grade levels on a yearly basis. This change in work environment may add to the level of stress a teacher experiences. Research by Nir and Kranot (2006) suggests that positive job experiences that lower stress and subsequently promote job satisfaction may contribute to the enhancement of teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

**Shared and Supportive Leadership Practices**

The association between teacher self-efficacy and leadership practices has been well established in the literature (Harris, 2005; Leithwood et al., 1999; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Research by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) suggested that building teacher leadership capacity improves teacher self-efficacy in relation to student learning. Shared and supportive leadership allows for leadership capacity to develop amongst educators. Lambert (2003) suggests that in order to build leadership capacity in a school
the development of district policies and practices that support leadership capacity building should be examined. Some of these leadership capacity building practices (e.g., shared decision making, promoting collaboration) relate directly to shared and supportive leadership practices. Professional Grow Plans could be the framework in which they are achieved. Building leadership capacity in a school relies on leaders to: encourage others to engage in self-reflection, promote collaborative decision making, create and facilitate opportunities to engage others in visionary thinking and planning, and to motivate others to implement practices that support school wide learning (Lambert, 2003).

Shared and supportive leadership practices are a key consideration when considering the importance of teachers’ collaboration in effecting school improvement (Fullen et al., 2006). Harris and Muijs (2003) suggested that when teachers are given opportunities to be engaged in leadership activities there is potential for professional development and growth that reinforce a teacher’s self-efficacy and self-esteem. According to Roy (2010), administrators need to “build the skills required for productive working relationships so that teachers feel safe examining their individual practices in the company of their colleagues” (p.3). This shared sense of learning is associated with the construct of Professional Learning Communities.

Professional Learning Communities, according to DuFour (2002), have three common elements: collaboration, interdependence, and continuous improvement. Taking up the first element, all educators in a Professional Learning Community collaboratively develop a widely shared vision that incorporates their values, goals and mission. Professional Grow Plans are individualistic in nature but have the potential to be a powerful mechanism for school reform if individual goals are framed within a school’s
shared vision. Senge (1990) indicated that shared leadership practices promote the creation of a shared vision which facilitates a sense of commonality and gives coherence to diverse actions.

The second element of a Professional Learning Community, interdependence, reflects that collaborative teams work interdependently to achieve common goals. The process of building greater teacher efficacy and promoting teacher and student learning within any given school relies on the individual strengths across the group. Everyone has ownership and a role to play. The increase in motivation to succeed suggests that each individual has a personal stake in collective success of the school. In this way, the synergistic effect of Personal Growth Plans that contribute to a common vision among a teaching cohort is complementary to Senge’s work on learning communities. Senge (1990) states that personal mastery, which Professional Grow Plans support, aids in the formation of building a shared vision. In this case, the shared vision is one of both teacher and student growth.

The final element of a Professional Learning Community is that the learning community focuses on continuous improvement that is guided by results. Administrators are tasked with the supervision, evaluation, and monitoring of instruction, as well as determining impacts on student learning (Blase & Blase, 2000). The research indicates that administrators are most effective when they focus on shared decision-making practices as it relates to student learning and collaboration amongst colleagues (Marks & Printy, 2003). How a teacher perceives their Personal Growth Plan fits within the scope of the broader school or District plan has implications for support, resources, commitment and teacher efficacy. If a teacher is directly involved in the creation of the
school goals then commitment to achieving those goals may be reflected in their Personal Growth Plan. If a teacher has goals imposed on them, teacher efficacy and commitment is at risk (Ashton, 1984).

One aspect of a qualitative study conducted by Angelle (2010) investigated how leadership practices can impact teacher efficacy in an American middle school. This study was approached from an organizational perspective and data was collected from principal and teacher interviews, student outcome records and observation of the organizational context. Angelle’s (2010) findings were that leadership practices were positively associated with organizational outcomes such as efficacy, increased trust, job satisfaction and teacher retention. However, it was unclear if these variables were synergistic or worked in isolation.

Leadership style matters in terms of teacher learning. According to Senge (1990), "The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people’s commitment and capacity to learn and lead at all levels in an organization" (p. 4).
Chapter 3: Procedures and Methods

Description of Research Design

In order to determine to what degree, if any, a teacher’s self-efficacy is associated with shared supportive leadership practices within a school, participants completed a paper based survey that was administered during a school based professional development day in October 2012. The survey consisted of 23 questions; it is reproduced in Appendix A. Using a Likert scale of one to five where one represented “none at all” and five represented “a great deal” nine questions canvassed how much influence a teacher believed they had on a particular classroom situation. Again using a Likert scale of one to five, this time where one represented “strongly disagree” and five represented “strongly agree”, the balance of the survey contained:

a) eight questions around shared and supportive leadership practices; and

b) five questions about the respondent’s views on the purpose of Professional Grow Plans, including whether Professional Grow Plans should be linked to teacher evaluation.

In the same survey, participants were asked one open response question designed to illicit the respondents’ general attitudes toward the purpose of Professional Grow Plans.

The data collected from the administered surveys were used to compare whether teachers with high self-efficacy scores were more likely to have a particular attitude towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans than teachers who had lower self-efficacy scores. The data collected were also used to determine if there was a correlation between teacher self-efficacy and shared supportive leadership practices within School District 69 (Qualicum)
Description of the Sample

All teachers who attended the mandatory School Based Professional Development Day and were actively teaching on temporary or continuing contacts in School District 69 on October 1, 2012 were provided with the opportunity to participate in this study.

“Teachers Teaching On Call” (TTOC) were eliminated from the sample since the nature of their transient assignments made it difficult for them to accurately assess the shared and supportive leadership practices of a particular school and its faculty. At the time the survey was administered there were 235 teachers in School District 69 of which a conservative estimate of 85% (n=200) were present on School-Based Professional Development day. According to the seniority list posted on the private School District 69 portal over 95% of teachers teaching within School District 69 had over five years of teaching experience.

Description of the Instruments Used and Reliability

The cross-sectional paper-based survey (Appendix B) consisted of:

a) nine questions adapted from the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) as developed by Anita Woolfolk Hoy and Megan Tschanne-Moran 2001;

b) eight questions adapted from section one (shared and supportive leadership practice) of the Professional Learning Communities Assessment-Revised (PLCA-R) instrument developed by Dianne F. Olivier, Kristine Kiefer Hipp, Brian Litke (2010);

c) five questions designed by the author of the study to illicit the respondent teacher’s attitude towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans; and
d) one open response question designed to illicit further information on what the participant believed to be the purpose of Professional Grow Plans.

The TSES component of the survey consisted of nine questions. The participants’ responses to the questions were gathered using a five-point Likert scale. That is, participants indicated their choice of response to a brief statement of how much influence they perceived they had on a given educational situation on a five-point scale where one corresponds to no influence and five represents a great deal of perceived influence. The nine questions were further split into three broad categories of teacher self-efficacy: three statements concerned efficacy over instructional strategies, three statements concerned efficacy in respect of classroom management and three statements concerned efficacy as it relates to student engagement.

The second part of the instrument consisted of eight statements that were adapted from the “Shared and Supportive Leadership” portion of the PLCA-R and used a five point, Likert scale where 1 represents “Strongly Disagree” and 5 reflects “Strongly Agree” to quantify the participants’ opinions. The PLCA-R instrument is a widely used survey used in education that has a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.94 for the Shared and Supportive Leadership section of the PLCA-R survey (http://www.sedl.org/plc/assessment_validity_reliability.html, March 2, 2012).

The five statements concerning attitudes towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans used a Likert scale ranging from one (Strongly Disagree) to five (Strongly Agree) to quantify the survey participants’ opinions about the purpose of Professional Grow Plans. Currently in School District 69, Professional Grow Plans are not standard practice among teachers. There is, however, a pending British Columbia Public School
Employers’ Association proposal to see Professional Grow Plans used as a component of or an alternative to traditional teacher evaluations.


One open response question was included in the survey to illicit further information on what the participant believed to be the purpose of Professional Grow Plans. Responses of the open ended question were grouped by emergent themes.

The closed ended portion of the survey instrument was designed so that a correlational analysis could be performed between the following variables: teacher efficacy, shared and supportive leadership practices, and each of the five questions concerning the purpose of Professional Grow Plans. The open ended question was chosen so that it encouraged a full, meaningful answer using the participant’s own knowledge and attitudes about Professional Grow Plans.

**Explanation of the Procedures Followed**

Potential survey respondents were invited to participate in the survey at a School based Professional Development day on October 1, 2012. Attendance at School Based Professional Development Days is mandatory for all teachers in School District 69 with continuing or temporary contracts. A Research Consent Letter (Appendix B) was attached to the distributed survey. The consent letter provided a full explanation of the purpose and intentions of the study. The consent letter indicated that participation was both voluntary and anonymous and that participants could withdraw at any time for any reason. The consent letter indicated that by completing the survey that the participant had indicated his or her consent to participate in the study.
A paper-based questionnaire was used because it was believed that the response rate would be higher if teachers did not have to actively seek out an on-line version of the survey instrument by accessing their email and clicking on a link. Consideration that surveys could be linked to individual IP addresses and that the anonymity of schools could be compromised were also reasons for choosing a paper based survey.

The surveys were directly distributed to teachers by the professional development representatives from each school on the School Based Professional Development Day on October 1, 2012. Participants were asked to return the completed surveys in sealed, plain white envelopes provided that were given to the school secretary or put in the district courier envelope directly by the teacher to mail to the District Resource Center by October 15, 2012. Administrators were not present in the room during the distribution of the surveys. Participation was strictly voluntary and consent was obtained through the completion of the survey. Surveys were then returned to a neutral party (Debbie Paul – District Resource Center Clerk) via the district courier system by October 15, 2012. Individual survey responses were deposited in a communal collection box located at the District Resource Center so that individual school responses could not be identified. All surveys were stored in a locked cabinet at the District Resource Center and then subsequently in a locked filing cabinet at the home office of the author of the study.

Validity

The number of survey participants (44%) suggested that the sample is representative of all teachers currently on contract and employed within School District 69 for the 2012-2013 academic year. A pre-test of the survey was conducted on a group of teachers outside of School District 69 (N=11) to test question clarity and whether the
length of the survey was appropriate. Verbal feedback from the test group of teachers was solicited to establish that the survey was appropriate for the study. Minor modifications of the survey instrument were made which included changing from a forced four point Likert Scale to a five point Likert Scale to increase response rate and rewording the open ended question for clarity.

The underlying methodologies of the TSES are well-established in the literature. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) have extensively studied the construct validity of the TSES by measuring the TSES against other instruments that measure self-efficacy and found the “TSES to be reliable and valid when assessing teacher self-efficacy” (p. 801).

The Shared and Supportive Leadership portion of the survey has “gone through construct validity (Expert Study and factor analysis) and has yielded satisfactory internal consistency for reliability” (see http://www.sedl.org/plc/assessment_validity_reliability.html, accessed March 19, 2012). The Shared and Supportive Leadership Practices part of the survey was a subsection of the Professional Learning Community Assessment-Revised (PLCA-R) developed by Olivier, Hipp and Huffman (2003).

The statements that assessed participants’ attitudes towards the function of Professional Grow Plans were developed by the author of this paper. In the development of these statements the author was mindful to avoid potential survey design elements which would artificially result in participants’ providing socially desirable answers in response to leading statements.

The possible limitation to this study that cannot be quantified was the political climate in which the research was conducted. All teachers that participated in the study were members of the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation which participated in strike
action from September 1, 2011 to March 17, 2012. One of the constraints of this period of job action was that communication between administrators and teachers was severely limited due to a Labour Board Ruling that deemed electronic communication and staff meetings to be a non-essential service. For this reason, teachers were asked to reflect upon shared and supportive leadership practices experienced outside of the 2011-2012 job action.

In an effort to ensure a maximum response rate the survey was paper based, anonymous and designed to take minimal time to fill out. The October 1, 2012 school based professional development day was chosen to recruit participants because attendance is mandatory for both enrolling and itinerant teachers. Response rates are generally higher if participants know the recruiter or believe that the study has personal value to them. Using professional development representatives on a professional development day was thought to add credibility and value to the study as most participants would be actively thinking about professional development activities on this day.

**Description and Justification of Analysis Methods**

A quantitative analysis of the survey results was conducted. The data were collected, grouped and entered into Microsoft Excel, a computer program used to calculate statistics. The mean of all questions answered was calculated for the TSES and the PLCA-R (Shared and Supportive Leadership Practices – Subsection) for each survey completed so that a single self-efficacy score and leadership practices score could be established. The survey responses were then assigned to either a high self-efficacy group or a low self-efficacy group. A high self-efficacy score was defined as being one that had
a mean greater or equal to seven out of a possible score of nine on the TSES. A low self-efficacy score was defined as being less than or equal to three. The mean, mode and the standard deviation were calculated for the TSES and the PLCA-R (Shared and Supportive Leadership Practices – Subsection) for both the high and the low self-efficacy groups. A correlation analysis using a Pearson’s correlation statistic was conducted between the PLCA-R and the TSES for both the high and the low efficacy groups. These mean results of the high efficacy group and the low self-efficacy scores were individually correlated with the mean answers of each of the questions concerning Professional Grow Plans. The results of the data were presented in a series of tables that indicated the degree, if any, of correlation the variables had with one another. This information formed the basis of a theoretical discussion of what practices best support teacher learning.
Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

This researcher sought to determine if shared and supportive leadership practices (SSLP) and teacher self-efficacy (TSE) were correlated in School District 69, Qualicum (SD69). Previous research (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003, Harris and Muijs, 2003) has suggested that these two variables have a high positive correlation and this study sought to determine if this relationship was also true for SD 69. A third variable of interest to this researcher was that of attitudes towards Professional Grow Plans and if attitudes towards their proposed purpose could be correlated with either SSLP or TSE as Professional Grow Plans aim to improve student achievement which is the same goal as teacher evaluations.

This researcher gathered data from SD69 teachers that were present on a district wide School-Based Professional Development day in the form of a paper survey (see Appendix C), which was distributed by school-based professional development representatives and then collected during a two week period in the fall of 2012. The total participant pool was 88 teachers, out of a possible 200 surveys distributed, which indicates a return rate of 44%. The survey responses from Parts One, Two and Three were analyzed using Microsoft Excel statistical software.

Part One of the survey was designed to elicit information about Teacher Self-Efficacy (TSE) beliefs. A five point Likert Scale was used to quantify the results, where five indicated either high self-efficacy beliefs, high shared and supportive leadership practices or agreement with a particular statement. The mean of aggregate TSE beliefs was found to be 3.6 with a SD of 0.53. In terms of Teacher Self-Efficacy, 23 participants (26%) scored as having a high aggregate teacher self-efficacy score ($5 > \mu \geq 4$). There were
seven participants (8%) that had a low-average aggregate teacher self-efficacy score (3>µ>2). The majority, 58 participants (66%) had a high-average self-efficacy score (4>µ≥3) illustrated in Figure 4.1.

The overall responses for the Teacher- Efficacy beliefs indicated that Question 6 which sought information about efficacy in classroom management techniques to be highest (mean=4.33 and mode=5). Question 4 solicited information about how much impact a child’s family life had on a teacher’s ability to impact learning, suggested that teachers believe it is a major factor in learning success (mean=2.51, mode=2). Table 2 illustrates this data. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of the responses for each of the TSE belief questions. Of note is question 1 from the TSE beliefs data. Question 1 approximates a bimodal distribution and indicates that although teachers feel that family background plays a significant role in a child’s learning it does not influence what they personally are able to do to help a child succeed. The difference between question 1 and 4 (See appendix C) is subtle but of significance. Data from questions 2,5,6,7 were reverse scored to indicate that a high numbered response indicated higher efficacy.
Table 4.1: Mean, SD and Mode of Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question # for TSE Beliefs</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Value reported based on a five point Likert scale where five indicates high a high self-efficacy score and 1 indicates a low self-efficacy score.

The questions from Section one of the survey were grouped into two categories that varied in the amount of influence a teacher would have on a particular student’s learning. Questions 2,5,6,7 explored the personal efficacy beliefs of a teacher in their ability to enhance a child’s learning experience in school. The remaining questions looked at external pressures that teachers believed to influence their ability to affect student learning. There was no discernible pattern to the responses based on external influence or personal influence with regards to teacher self-efficacy.

The second part of the survey elicited responses about shared and supportive leadership practices within their current schools. The overall mean of the Shared and
Supportive Leadership Practice (SSLP) questions was 3.55 with a SD of 0.88. The mode for all questions was four which indicates that the majority of participants in the survey believe that shared and supportive leadership behaviours are practiced within School District 69. Three questions about SSLPs were above the mean but none were one standard deviation about the mean. The questions that were above the mean were ones that dealt with shared decision making (Questions 1 & 2) and Question 4 that indicated that opportunities were provided for staff to initiate change. Table 2 indicates the mean, SD and mode of each response as well as the combined average of all the questions and the SD of the aggregated responses. Figure

Table 4.2: Mean, SD and Mode of Shared and Supportive Leadership Practice Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number for SSLP Questions</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>Combined Question Aggregate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard Deviation</strong></td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scores based on a five point Likert scale where five indicates high level of shared and supportive leadership practices.
Table 4.3: Collapsed Likert Scale for Shared and Supportive Leadership Practice Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Percent that agreed with the statement*</th>
<th>Percent that disagreed with the statement*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages do not equal 100% as some participants neither agreed or disagreed with the statement.

Part three of the survey elicited information about the degree to which Professional Grow Plans should be linked to various levels of the educational system hierarchy (personal, school, district and ministry goals). The final question in part three was if Professional Grow Plans should be a component of teacher evaluations. There was an increasing resistance to linking Professional Grow Plan goals to outside goals as one
went up the educational hierarchy ladder. Table 3 illustrates this phenomenon. There was no consensus if Professional Grow Plans should be a component of teacher evaluations although the distribution of responses indicated that more teachers strongly disagreed with the statement than strongly agreed but if the responses were collapsed into just agree or disagree they essentially were equal (37% and 38% respectively).

Table 4.4: Mean, SD and Mode - Attitudes towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plan (PGPs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1 - PGPs linked to personal goals</th>
<th>2 - PGPs linked to school goals</th>
<th>3 - PGPs linked to district goals</th>
<th>4 - PGPs linked to ministry goals</th>
<th>5 - PGPs as a component of teacher evaluations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scores based on a five point Likert scale where five indicates high level of agreement to the statement.

Pearson’s Correlation Coefficients

Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Shared and Supportive Leadership Practices

A Pearson’s $r$ value was computed to assess the relationship between responses to Teacher Self-Efficacy Belief (TSEB) and Shared and Supportive Leadership Practices.
When determining a correlation, a positive value for the correlation indicates a positive association between two variables. Conversely, a negative value for the correlation implies an inverse association between two variables. A perfect correlation would result in an r value of one. There was no significant correlation between the two variables as indicated by Table 4. The correlation coefficient between the aggregate mean of TSE beliefs and SSL practices was found to be 0.14 which also indicates the two variables are not correlated.

**Table 4.5: Correlation Coefficients (r values) - Individual Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SSLP 1</th>
<th>SSLP 2</th>
<th>SSLP 3</th>
<th>SSLP 4</th>
<th>SSLP 5</th>
<th>SSLP 6</th>
<th>SSLP 7</th>
<th>SSLP 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TSEB 1</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSEB 2</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSEB 3</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSEB 4</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSEB 5</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSEB 6</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSEB 7</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSEB 8</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSEB 9</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs and the Perceived Purpose of Professional Grow Plans

A Pearson’s r value was computed to assess the relationship between responses to Teacher Self-Efficacy Belief (TSEB) and the purpose of PGPs. There was no correlation between the two variables as indicated by Table 5.

**Table 4.6 – Correlation Coefficients (r) between Individual Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs (TSEB) responses and attitudes towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans statements.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TSEB 1</th>
<th>TSEB 2</th>
<th>TSEB 3</th>
<th>TSEB 4</th>
<th>TSEB 5</th>
<th>TSEB 6</th>
<th>TSEB 7</th>
<th>TSEB 8</th>
<th>TSEB 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PGP 1</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGP 2</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGP 3</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGP 4</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGP 5</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shared and Supportive Leadership Practices and the Perceived Purpose of Professional Grow Plans

A Pearson’s r value was computed to assess the relationship between perceived shared and supportive leadership practices and the purpose of Professional Grow Plans. There was no correlation between the two variables as indicated by Table 6.

**Table 4.7: Correlation Coefficients between Shared and Supportive Leadership Practices (SSLP) and attitudes towards Professional Grow Plan (PGP) statements.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SSLP 1</th>
<th>SSLP 2</th>
<th>SSLP 3</th>
<th>SSLP 4</th>
<th>SSLP 5</th>
<th>SSLP 6</th>
<th>SSLP 7</th>
<th>SSLP 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PGP 1</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.11</td>
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<td>.13</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.16</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGP 1</td>
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<td>.11</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGP 1</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.15</td>
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Open Ended Question about the purpose of Professional Grow Plans

A response (n=41) was garnered from the open ended question concerning the purpose of Professional Grow Plans. Three themes emerged from the open ended question. The first theme indicated student or teacher learning and/or a change in teaching practices should be the proposed purpose of Professional Grow Plans. Twenty-three participants (56% of those that responded to the open ended question) mentioned directly or eluded to this common theme. The second theme that emerged was that the purpose of Professional Grow Plans should be to facilitate either communication or collaboration between educators. Twelve participants (29% of those that responded to the open ended question) thought that the collaboration and communication should be the purpose of Professional Grow Plans.

A third theme that emerged indicated that teachers place a high value on maintaining professional autonomy with regards to personal goal setting and that
Professional Growth Plans should be developed by and for the individual. Comments ranged from the strongly worded, “Professional Grow Plans should be used as a guide not a dictatorship” to “Professional Grow Plans should be up to the individual teacher to initiate and follow through with”. The majority (51%) of the comments indicated that respecting an individual’s right to set their own goals should be the primary consideration when constructing a Professional Growth Plan.
Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

Summary and Discussion

This study investigated Teacher Self-Efficacy (TSE) beliefs, Shared and Supportive Leadership (SSL) practices and attitudes towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans within School District 69 (Qualicum). It considered whether the extent to which there may be a willingness to adopt Professional Grow Plans as a component of teacher evaluations. The research question was developed in response to the current political climate of British Columbia’s education system concerning teacher competency and accountability as well as the researcher’s desire to explore attitudes toward using Professional Grow Plans as a framework to facilitate teacher and student learning.

Information about how teachers feel concerning their ability to impact student learning (teacher self-efficacy) and the structures and leadership behaviours that promote teacher and student learning will impact the success of School District 69’s ability grow and adapt to meet the needs of future students. The willingness of teachers to acknowledge areas for growth, as well as embrace the leadership practices that support risk-taking and a sense of community will be instrumental in moving forward School District 69 (Qualicum) as a district leader in innovation, inquiry and student achievement.

This study sought to determine if there was an inter-correlation between teacher-self-efficacy, attitudes towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans and perceived shared and supportive leadership practices within School District 69. A literature review was completed drawing on international, North American and Canadian research (current to March 2013). An anonymous paper-based survey was created and distributed to examine attitudes towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans and if these attitudes
correlated to a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy or the perceived leadership practices teachers reported having experienced in their school setting. The decision to make the survey anonymous attempted to negate social desirability bias, that is, the tendency for research participants to portray themselves in a more favourable light. The anonymous survey nature of the survey was also in response to the concern that teachers would be reluctant to publicly evaluate the leadership practices of their current administrators if the evaluations were not favourable.

The survey consisted of Likert style questions around teacher self-efficacy beliefs, the perception of whether their current school leader promoted and used shared and supportive leadership behaviours and the teacher’s opinion of the purpose of Professional Grow Plans. The survey was divided into sections that corresponded with the three areas of study. Participants were asked to rank their responses on a five-point Likert like scale. An open-ended qualitative style question followed the final section to illicit deeper insights into attitudes towards Professional Grow Plans.

Data were then analyzed to determine if any correlations existed between Teacher Self-Efficacy beliefs, Shared and Supportive Leadership Practices and the purpose of Professional Grow Plans in School District #69 (Qualicum). The qualitative data was tallied for reoccurring themes that teachers identified as the purpose of Professional Grow Plans.

**Findings of Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs**

Self-efficacy is a construct that is concerned with an individual’s belief that s/he has the ability to successfully carry out a task (Bandura, 1997). There is a strong connection between self-efficacy and actual performance (McCormick & McPherson,
2003) as self-efficacy beliefs affect commitment, persistence, motivation, the ability to take risks, tackle complex tasks and the ability to deal with stress (Bandura, 1997).

In examining whether teacher self-efficacy could be predictive of whether a teacher was willing to adopt a growth model framework for teacher evaluations in the form of a Professional Grow Plan, the political climate in which the study was completed is of significance. In the academic year preceding this study, the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation was embroiled in a bitter labour dispute that had all teachers involved in a “teach only” campaign. The “teach only” campaign severely restricted communication between administers and teachers. There were no staff meetings, no electronic communications and no formal collaboration between BCTF members and the School Board and the Principals and Vice-Principals Association.

Although there were many contentious issues in the labour protest, professional development and teacher evaluations were significant issues at the bargaining table, with both the BCTF and the BC Public School Employers’ Association entrenched in their respective positions that each wanted to maintain control over the direction of these endeavours (Herron, 2012). An abrupt end to job action [by act of the Legislature], three months prior to the data collection of this study, created an opportunity to repair damaged relationships in the fall of 2012. The issues of control surrounding professional development and teacher evaluations as of yet is unresolved and will remain a priority for both parties during the next round of contract negotiations starting in the spring of 2013.

The teacher self-efficacy beliefs that were the highest, where the mode (Θ) was ≥ 4, were classroom management techniques (Θ=5), assessment techniques (Θ=4), ability
to motivate students ($\Theta=4$), challenging behaviours ($\Theta=4$), academic teaching techniques ($\Theta=4$), ability to correct behaviour ($\Theta=4$), and a teacher’s self-perceived impact on learning within the classroom environment ($\Theta=4$). These findings are consistent with the literature surrounding attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), which suggests that self-efficacy is highest when an individual perceives s/he is actively in control of the cause of the behaviour.

Professional development opportunities within School District 69 have had a strong focus on assessment practices and the ability to motivate students in the last three years and enrollment in these sessions have been significant (MATA In-District PD Committee, 2013). This author concludes that the creation of common language surrounding assessment and student engagement/motivation within School District 69 has contributed to increased feelings of mastery over these pedagogical practices.

The teaching population in School District 69 (Qualicum) is a seasoned teaching staff with over 95% of the teaching staff with over five years of experience according to the seniority list posted on the private School District 69 portal. According to Klassen and Chiu (2010) as well as Walker and Slear (2011) this high level of teacher seniority has implications for leadership behaviours.

Walker and Slear’s study (2011) indicates that experienced teachers’ sense of self-efficacy is influenced more by emotional factors such as inspiration and purpose rather than direct support and modeling. For this reason the willingness of school administration to create a collective vision is of greater importance, as common goals give a focus, purpose and a sense of community to those within the education system.
(Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). The literature recognizes too that emotional states impact teacher self-efficacy (Barbett & McCormick, 2004). Being cognizant of the culture of the school and actively promoting a sense of community through shared decisions, open communication and the sharing of information enables leaders to promote self-efficacy beliefs by creating a culture that decreases uncertainty and stress as key decisions are constructed collaboratively rather than imposed.

In times of uncertainty when declining enrolment creates conditions where many teachers are forced to move school or switch grade levels stress becomes an important variable in teacher self-efficacy. Creating a culture that promotes teacher self-efficacy to vulnerable teaching populations is of importance for school leaders. Research has traditionally sought out information about new teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs as they are thought to be vulnerable due to limited mastery experiences. In the current climate of uncertainty, vulnerable teachers might include those that have recently been moved out of areas where they have experienced mastery. This is an area that should be considered for future research.

Bandura (1997) identifies key factors that affect self-efficacy: 1) experience of mastery; 2) modeling or vicarious experience (observing others in similar positions succeed) 3) social persuasion (positive or negative feedback from another person) and 4) physiological factors (such as perception of stress or fear). These factors directly relate to a teacher’s motivation, confidence and self knowledge. When the individual questions were analyzed the study results indicated that teacher self-efficacy was high within School District 69. However, when these results were scrutinized further, especially when one looked at individual teacher responses as opposed to an aggregate of all the
responses to a given question, the picture of teacher self-efficacy within School District 69 was not as positive. The data suggests that teacher self-efficacy across all domains of teaching practices is not evenly distributed. The data suggests that actions that promote cooperation between home and school would increase general efficacy: for example, respondent teachers reported a strong belief that they could do more for any given student if they were working in cooperation with a student’s family.

Current contract language sets a minimum number of formal and informal reports on progress between teachers and parents. Administrators have little to no impact in how these communications build or decrease home/school relationships. This is an area that warrants further investigation as creating opportunities where teachers feel their sphere of influence extends beyond the confines of the school would greatly benefit student learning.

The teacher self-efficacy beliefs were lowest, where the mode (θ) was >2, in the context of family environment (θ=2) and support or lack of support from parents (θ=2). These results further substantiate that locus of control is an important constraint of self-efficacy, as teachers perceive they have little control over the amount a parent supports their child or the home environment that the student comes from (Bandura, 1997). Despite teachers reporting that they do not have very much ability to influence a student’s home environment or the level of student support by parents or guardians, high personal teacher self-efficacy beliefs have been shown to significantly affect academic achievement even if negative influences outside of the classroom are present (Guskey & Passaro, 1994). This fact is of significance as formal leaders within the district can help create a positive narrative of what schools can and do accomplish despite the potential
negative influence of some home environments. Structuring school goals around appreciative inquiry and publicly celebrating successes would be a natural starting point.

**Findings of Shared and Supportive Leadership Practices within School District 69**

The majority of teachers within School District 69 responded that shared and supportive leadership practices were present in their current school as evidenced by a mode of four in all questions posed in section two of the survey. Although the survey portion indicated that teachers felt they were involved in decision making and the shared responsibility for student learning, the comments portion of the survey eluded to a general mistrust or perhaps unwillingness to have any guidance given in respect of setting personal professional goals. Comments like: “Professional Grow Plans should be aligned to school goals only if we have input on what they are” and “If growth plans are aligned with district and ministry goals then teachers should NOT be required to use their own funds to follow the growth plan” provide insight on how precarious the relationship between administrators and teachers is in terms of professional autonomy and shared decision making practices. Interestingly these responses were from individual teachers who agreed that shared and supportive leadership practices were apparent in their school. These respondents also had a high sense of teacher self-efficacy.

Edwards, Green, and Lyons (2002) found that the professional treatment of teachers by principals was a significant factor in the development of teacher efficacy, as was a principal’s ability to empower teachers (Ross, 1995). Although the mode of all Shared and Supportive Leadership questions was four, if the Likert Scale was collapsed into a forced binary scale of agree or disagree a different theme emerged. When
examining the collapsed scale there was evidence that shared and supportive leadership practices that still maintained a “power over” dynamic were more common than behaviours that shared leadership and responsibility equally among teachers and administrators. For example, 77% of teachers agreed that their administration incorporated teachers’ advice in making decisions but only 53% of teachers agreed with the statement that administration democratically shared power with teachers.

**Findings of attitudes towards the purpose of Professional Grow Plans**

An overwhelming majority of teacher respondents (84%) agreed Professional Grow Plans should be linked to teacher professional goals. Only five percent disagreed with this statement and 11 percent of respondents were neutral, neither agreeing or disagreeing. Given the personal nature of growth plans, this result was expected. When teachers were asked if Professional Grow Plans should be linked to school goals there was a substantial drop in acceptance with just 43% of participants in agreement. There was no correlation between a teachers’ sense of self-efficacy, or a positive sense of shared and supportive leadership practices and a willingness to adopt school goals in individual Professional Grow Plan. The percentages of teachers who agreed or strongly agreed that Professional Grow Plan goals should be linked to district and Ministry goals were both found to be 26%.

The researcher expected that a willingness to adopt goals that were generated further away from an individual’s sphere of influence would be less but only if shared and supportive leadership practices were not apparent in the school. This hypothesis was unsubstantiated by this research as shared and supportive leadership practices did not positively correlate with a willingness to adopt Professional Grow Plan goals that
extended beyond personal goals. This finding is significant as it implies that adopting shared and supportive leadership practices cannot be assumed to equate to a willingness to work towards achieving a shared goal whether it be a school, district or Ministry goal.

Of the survey respondents, no clear consensus emerged on whether Professional Grow Plans would be a valuable change in the evaluation model in School District 69 (Qualicum). Thirty-seven percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that Professional Grow Plans should be a component of teacher evaluations. At the same time, 38% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that Professional Grow Plans should be used for evaluation purposes. There were no statistically significance correlations between a teacher’s self-efficacy belief, and shared and supportive leadership practices and a particular view on using Professional Grow Plans as part of the evaluation model in School District 69. This suggests that some teachers are open to a new mode of teacher evaluations but what predicts this view is not apparent from this study. Several teachers who responded “strongly agreed” to the statement that Professional Grow Plans should be a component of teacher evaluations directly referenced the need for accountability within the profession. Statements such as, “accountability should not be mistaken/confused with professional autonomy” and “individual Professional Grow Plans are a needed action in any profession” are reflective of individuals who want transparency in a system that is tasked with maintaining high standards of teaching excellence. This researcher maintains, backed by research by Hord (1997), that School District 69 should continue to build a professional culture of learning before imposing new or altered frameworks on professional development. Creating a culture that is steeped in the shared personal
practice of all stakeholders with mutual respect, openness and trust is a starting point identified by a significant number of survey respondents.

Most survey respondents appear to be demographically well-versed in the existing professional development and teacher evaluation programs. After all, the majority of teachers within School District 69 has more than five years of teaching experience (and therefore have had two teaching evaluations). Perhaps teacher evaluations should remain in the domain of establishing competency and Professional Grow Plans be used to pave the way for professional learning where competency has already been established.

**Limitations**

This study sought to examine if teacher self-efficacy beliefs, perceptions of shared and supportive leadership practices within in a school and the perceived purpose of Professional Grow Plans, were correlated and if they were would they be welcomed as a component of teacher evaluations in School District 69 to support student and teacher learning. The invitation to participate in the survey was extended to all teachers within School District 69 that were present on the October 1st In-District PD day in 2012. This study had a 44% return rate, which left 56% of the teaching population not identifying their self-efficacy beliefs, how shared or supportive their administrators were and what they believed to be the purpose of Professional Grow Plans. For this reason the results cannot be generalized to a larger context or different school district.

Due to maintaining confidentiality, demographic information was not sought in this study. Given that the leadership behaviours that impact teacher self-efficacy are different depending on years of experience and teaching context this could have impacted
teacher self-efficacy scores. New teachers or those in new teaching contexts benefit from modeling and descriptive feedback to increase their self-efficacy beliefs (Walker and Slear, 2011) whereas experienced teachers require leadership that promotes a sense of purpose and empowerment.

Data from the quantitative sections of the survey were not always in agreement with the qualitative data from the open ended question about the purpose of Professional Grow Plans. For example, a teacher that indicated they agreed that they should be used as a component of teacher evaluations then stated, “It is a COLLABORATIVE tool not an ACCOUNTABILITY tool” when asked what they felt the purpose of Professional Grow Plans should be in SD69. Due to the open ended nature of the question many responses eluded to what “should” happen but indicated there was a general mistrust of what “actually” might happen if a teacher’s professional autonomy in terms of goal setting was not honoured. Comments such as, “[The purpose of Professional Grow Plans is] to give ownership to professional of their learning (not top down)” and “relationship building must come first” indicate that more research is needed to determine if there is sufficient trust between stakeholders to enter into meaningful conversations about the future direction of professional development and teacher evaluations in School District 69.

The current political climate and previous job action may have influenced participants’ responses. It is suggested by this researcher that perhaps after a year of participating in a “teach only” campaign, any if not all acts that appeared collaborative between administrators and teachers might have been celebrated. Furthermore, the timing of the survey might have influenced the responses as data was collected early in the school year when teachers are refreshed from summer break and are still in the process of
getting to know the challenges of their current students. This researcher suspects that if the study was conducted near the end of the school year then the results might have been different both for shared and supportive leadership practices as well as teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

While the results of this study were not what were hypothesised, the responses indicate that working at an individual level may not be enough to impact significant change within the educational system. Political unrest has created tension between teachers and administration. Although, superficially there appears to be a desire to work together to support teacher and student learning there appears to not be a significant foundation of trust to create the conditions needed to move forward.

**Recommendations for Practice**

Due to the demographics of School District 69 (Qualicum) focus needs to be paid on creating opportunities for educators to make decisions that empower and drive a collective purpose of keeping student learning at the center. Administrators need to be cognizant of superficial shared and supportive leadership behaviours that solicit advice but do not require them to act on the recommendations and knowledge of their colleagues.

British Columbia is attempting to make wide-spread educational changes in order to meet the needs of the 21 Century learner. British Columbia needs to have an army of educators that are committed at keeping student and teaching learning at the forefront of the debate. Creating opportunities where teachers can take risks with their learning and having administrators model current teaching practices is a place to start. Although
School District 69 has an experienced teaching staff, when pedagogical shifts occur the leadership practices that need to be visible may be those that apply to both new and experienced teachers in terms of teacher self-efficacy. Having teachers experience success with new ways of teaching, watching others including administrators model how they can achieve success, giving descriptive feedback of what is working well within one’s teaching practice and minimizing the amount of fear, uncertainty and stress are of utmost importance.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Given that the teacher self-efficacy, shared and supportive leadership practices within the school were not correlated in School District it creates the question of “why” when teacher self-efficacy and shared and supportive leadership practices have been shown to be positively correlated in a significant number of former studies. It is suggested that investigating the issue of trust and also other formal leadership roles within the education system should be examined. This researcher does not dispute that “what” leaders do impacts student learning. This research study, however, only examined one side of formal leadership that directly impacts teachers. Further research is needed to investigate the role that formal leadership within the BCTF plays in teacher self-efficacy as well as the willingness to adopt school, district or Ministry goals. This researcher is unaware of any research that examines perceived shared and supportive leadership practices within the BCTF and what impact this has on supporting student and teacher learning. This is an area that warrants further investigation and study.
Although the data did not solicit information on trust within the school district, this researcher suspects that the political unrest over the last ten years has eroded many teachers’ ability to extend trust in matters pertaining to professional development and professional autonomy. Examining the construct of trust and a teacher’s ability to align their professional goals with a school, district or ministry goal would be of benefit. If it was found that a lack of trust caused unwillingness to goal set for a common purpose then structures that foster trust amongst colleagues would need to be embedded in all actions from school principals to Ministry officials to create the culture needed to enact educational change.
REFERENCES


Mount Arrowsmith Teachers’ Association, In-District Professional Development Committee (2013). *Registration for In-District PD Days by session from 2010-2013*. Unpublished raw data.


ARTICLE E.24 - EVALUATION OF TEACHING

24.1 All evaluation reports on a teacher shall be in writing.

24.2 Evaluations shall take place:
   a. during the teacher's first year in the district,
   b. during the teacher's fifth year in the district,
   c. during the teacher's tenth year in the district and every fifth year thereafter; or
   d. at the request of the teacher; or
   e. at the initiative of the Superintendent of Schools when he/she deems it to be necessary.

24.3 An evaluation report on a teacher shall provide an assessment of the teacher's performance. The written assessment shall include details relating to:
   a. Data Collection - a description of the process used to compile information for the report.
   b. Assignment - a description of the teacher's assigned role, the classroom situation, and the school.
   c. Criteria for Teacher Reports - teacher evaluation reports shall be based upon the criteria articulated in Article E.24.16.
   d. Summary Comments - a description of teacher strengths and, if necessary, recommendations for improvement.
e. Evaluation Statement - the evaluation statement on all teacher reports shall read as follows: The teacher's performance as it relates to the Criteria is satisfactory/less than satisfactory.

24.4 All teachers shall receive a copy of the Criteria for Teacher Reports at the beginning of the year.

24.5 Evaluation Procedures - the procedure to be followed for teacher reports shall be based upon the following:

a. Notice
   i. Teachers who are involved in an evaluation shall be informed by September 30, except under Article E.24.2.d and E.24.2.e.
   ii. At least ten (10) working days prior to commencing observations the evaluator shall meet with the teacher to discuss the purpose of the evaluation, the procedures to be followed, the expected time span of observations and the criteria to be used.
   iii. Evaluations begun under one set of criteria shall conclude under the same set of criteria.

b. Pre-observation Conference - a pre-observation conference shall be held between the evaluator and the teacher before each observation. Decisions related to the time for the observation and the data to be collected shall be discussed and clarified.

c. Observation of the Teacher - data related to the stated criteria shall be collected and analyzed by the evaluator.

d. Post-observation Conference
i. The teacher shall have the opportunity to have a conference with the evaluator within twenty-four (24) hours of the observation unless otherwise agreed to between the teacher and the evaluator.

ii. During this conference the data shall be reviewed and discussed with aims of identifying specific strengths to be maintained and, if necessary, areas for improvement by the teacher.

iii. A copy of the evaluator's written notes or a summary of each observation shall be presented to the teacher at the post-observation conference.

iv. The post-observation conference shall be deemed to be the pre-observation conference for the following observation, should there be one, unless otherwise agreed to between the teacher and the evaluator.

e. Draft Report

i. A draft copy of the report shall be prepared by the evaluator and the teacher shall have a reasonable opportunity to meet with the evaluator at least forty-eight (48) hours before submission of the final report. A copy of the draft report shall be provided to the teacher.

ii. The teacher may be accompanied to a meeting pursuant to this subsection by a representative of the Association. The evaluator may be accompanied by an administrative officer.

iii. Specific strengths and, if necessary, recommendations for improvement shall be stated. Reference to criteria shall be substantiated by objective data or specific examples.
iv. The report shall reflect only those areas discussed during the evaluative process.

f. Final Report - the final report shall be filed in the teacher's personnel file at the School District Office. A copy shall be given to the teacher at the time of filing. One additional copy may be retained for a reasonable period of time by the author for his/her record. Except, as required by law, all reports shall be treated on a strictly confidential basis. A teacher may submit a written commentary on any written report which shall be attached to and filed with all copies of the report.

24.6 An evaluation report shall be based on a minimum of three (3) observations to a maximum of six (6) observations. Periods chosen for observation shall not be at abnormal or inappropriate times and the teacher shall have the opportunity to select up to half the observation times.

24.7 Whenever specific recommendations for improvement are identified by the evaluator, a plan of assistance appropriate to the development of a satisfactory standard of performance as it pertains to the evaluation criteria shall be designed by the evaluator in consultation with the teacher before the final report is prepared. Such a plan shall specify expected changes within a specified timeline.

24.8 Reports shall reflect any discrepancy between the teacher's assignment, professional training, and preferences of teaching subjects and grades.

24.9 The evaluator who commences an evaluation shall be the person who conducts the observations, confers with the teacher, and prepares the report.
24.10 If, prior to the commencement of observations in accordance with this Article, the teacher believes there exists an apprehension of bias on the part of the evaluator, the teacher may request a meeting with the Superintendent of Schools and a representative of the Association to discuss the teacher's concerns. If a teacher requests an alternate evaluator, his/her request shall not be unreasonably denied. The alternate evaluator shall be selected by the Superintendent of Schools.

24.11 Involvement or non-involvement in extra-curricular activities or participation in Association activities shall not be commented upon by the evaluator.

24.12 The application, interpretation, operation or alleged violation of this Article, specifically referred to in Article E.24.3.c, E.24.3.e, E.24.5.a.ii, E.24.5, E.24.7, E.24.14 and E.24.16 may be grieved in accordance with Article A.6 (Grievance Procedure).

24.13 For instructive purposes of this Article, it is recognized that the Superintendent of Schools or designate shall, except as limited by this Agreement, continue to exercise his/her normal discretion in supervising and advising regarding instruction consistent with the *School Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, c.412 with amendments* and Regulations.

24.14 When the processes and/or the criteria for teacher evaluation are not appropriate due to the nature of the teacher's assignment, the evaluator shall seek the agreement of the teacher to a set of processes and/or criteria which are consistent with the processes and the criteria referred to in this Article. Failing agreement, the Superintendent of Schools shall establish the processes and/or criteria to be used consistent with the processes and the criteria referred to in this Article.
24.15
a. Where requested in advance by a Teacher on Call and where practicable, taking into consideration other commitments of the administrative officer, one or more single observation report(s) shall be provided by an administrative officer of a school to which the Teacher on Call is assigned. The provisions of Article E.24.1, E.24.3.a – E.24.3.d, E.24.4, E.24.5.c –E.24.5.f, E.24.8, E.24.11, E.24.12, E.24.13 and E.24.14 shall apply to such single observation reports, recognizing that the report will evaluate one day of Teacher on Call teaching. It is recognized that, where mutually acceptable, the timelines in Article E.24.4 and E.24.5 may need to be extended. The maximum number of such reports in any school year shall be five (5).

b. An administrative officer may prepare a single observation report on the same basis as set out in (a), where the administrative officer requests it in advance and at a time mutually acceptable. The maximum number of such reports prepared in any school year shall be five (5).

c. In all evaluations of Teachers on Call the criteria and their specific application must be altered to suit the scope and duration of the teaching assignment upon which the evaluation is based.

24.16 The criteria for evaluation shall be:

a. Knowledge Of Subject Matter And Child Development
   i. demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter being taught.
   ii. utilizes knowledge of appropriate developments, research and trends in the subject area being taught and in child development.
iii. endeavours to keep his/her knowledge current and his/her teaching techniques effective for the teaching areas and children he/she is assigned.

b. Preparation And Planning

i. develops long- and short-term objectives which provide a variety of learning experiences.

ii. utilizes appropriate material and personnel resources.

iii. plans for individual difference.

iv. cooperates with other personnel and parents to plan and implement programs that provide for individual differences among students.

v. identifies daily learning objectives.

vi. creates a physical setting that contributes to learning.

vii. provides plans and clear directions for Teachers on Call.

c. Instructional Skills

i. motivates students to achieve their potential.

ii. uses various resources to promote learning.

iii. uses relevant classroom displays and displays of student work to promote learning.

iv. presents skills and content clearly and cogently.

v. asks questions which promote a higher order of thinking skills.

vi. effectively monitors individual understanding.

vii. creates assignments which utilize, reinforce, or expand upon the content of the lesson.
viii. involves students in experiences and activities designed to develop and stimulate thought with due consideration for individual differences.

d. Classroom Management and Professional Relationships

i. develops positive rapport with students.

ii. encourages students to assume responsibility for their own actions, to practise self-discipline, and to develop a positive self-concept.

iii. promotes positive relationships with and among students.

iv. demonstrates consistency, respect and fairness in dealing with students.

v. establishes consistent routines and clear expectations for student conduct appropriate to the activity.

vi. maintains an orderly environment.

vii. encourages student on-task behaviour.

viii. encourages all students to achieve to their fullest potential.

ix. maintains individually and cooperatively a high standard of professional conduct with pupils, colleagues and parents.

e. Student Achievement and Management Of Records

i. establishes specific procedures for assessing student performance and communicates these procedures clearly to students, parents and other personnel.

ii. utilizes the results of student performance assessments to plan for future instruction.

iii. interprets the results of student assessments.

iv. identifies the reasons students have or have not met instructional objectives.
v. maintains appropriate, accurate records of student achievement, attendance, and other necessary data.
APPENDIX B: Invitation to Participate and Consent Form

Invitation to Participate and Statement of Consent for

Professional Growth Plans: An examination of teacher self-efficacy and leadership practices that support teacher and student learning.

Principal Investigator: Denise Spencer-Dahl, Graduate Student, Vancouver Island University
Contact Information: Denise Spencer-Dahl, 250 248 3296, Email: dspencer@sd69.bc.ca
Student Supervisor: Dr. Rachel Moll, Faculty of Education, Vancouver Island University, Email: Rachel.Moll@viu.ca

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled “Professional Growth Plans: An examination of teacher self-efficacy and leadership practices that support teacher and student learning”. The study is open for all School District 69 teachers who are currently in temporary or continuing postings in School District 69 (Qualicum).

Purpose of Study:
This study is being conducted by Denise Spencer-Dahl in partial fulfillment of the requirements of her Masters of Educational Leadership at Vancouver Island University.

The purpose of the study is to explore teachers’ attitudes towards the purpose of Professional Growth Plans and if these attitudes are associated with teacher self-efficacy or shared and supportive leadership practices. Professional Growth Plans are currently being proposed as part of the teacher evaluation model for British Columbia teachers. The responses collected could affect the organization, support and facilitation of Professional Development Activities in District 69 as this research will likely inform my work as the co-chair of the In-District Professional Development Committee.

Study Procedures:

To participate in this study you will be asked to complete a paper-based anonymous survey. The survey should not take more than 15 minutes of your time. You will be asked to answer questions about your beliefs about the purpose of Professional Growth Plans, your self-efficacy beliefs and about shared and supportive leadership practices within your school. Surveys may be returned to the District Resource Center in the supplied envelope until October 15, 2012 via the district courier.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip questions or choose not to continue completing the survey at any time, for any reason, and without penalty. However if you submit your responses to the District Resource Center, the information you have provided cannot be removed from the survey results as your responses cannot be distinguished from other participants. Data will be compiled and
analyzed by the Principal Investigator. Data will be reported on at an academic conference at Vancouver Island University and published as a partial requirement for the Principal Investigator’s Master of Education thesis.

Potential Risks: No known potential risks

Potential Benefits: Results from this study may be used to advocate for best practices in teacher learning and leadership practices if Professional Growth Plans become common practice in British Columbia. The responses collected could affect the organization, support and facilitation of Professional Development Activities in District 69 as this research will likely inform Denise Spencer-Dahl in her capacity as the co-chair of the In-District Professional Development Committee.

Confidentiality: No names are being collected in this study. Although your responses may be quoted in study results, any information you provide that may inadvertently identify you will not be presented. Your survey data will remain anonymous and confidential. Only the Principal Investigator and her supervisor will have access to your survey data. Study documents will be securely stored for 2 years and then destroyed. Participants will not be identified by name and results cannot be attributed to a particular school. Electronic data and results of this study will be stored on a secured computer with restricted access (password).

Contact for information about the study:

If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Denise Spencer-Dahl at dspencer@sd69.bc.ca. General results will be made available after June 2013 by contacting Denise Spencer-Dahl at the above email.

If you have any concerns about your treatment as a participant in this research, please contact the Vancouver Island Research Ethics Officer at reb@viu.ca or by telephone at 1-888-920-2221 (local 2665).

Consent:

By completing any question and submitting the survey to the District Resource Center, you consent to participate in this research project and the information you provide to be used in study results.

Please keep a copy of this Statement of Consent for your records. The survey is attached.
APPENDIX C: Survey
## TEACHER BELIEFS

**Directions:** Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the five responses in the columns on the right side, ranging from (1) Strongly Agree to (5) “Strongly Disagree”. Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position. (Adapted from Teacher Efficacy Scale – Hoy & Woolfolk 1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When I really try, I can get through to most difficult students.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a student’s home environment is a large influence on his/her achievement.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If parents would do more for their children, I could do more.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him/her quickly.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If one of my students couldn’t do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. A teacher can’t do much because most of a student’s motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. If students aren’t disciplined at home, they aren’t likely to accept any discipline.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## SHARED AND SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP

**Directions:** Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below by marking any one of the five responses in the columns on the right side, ranging from (1) “Strongly Disagree” or (5) “Strongly Agree”. Please respond the statements by considering each of the following in your present position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither disagree or agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The staff is consistently involved in discussions and making decisions about most school issues.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. School administration incorporates advice from staff to make decisions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The staff has access to key information.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLANS AND TEACHER LEARNING**

4. Opportunities are provided for staff to initiate change.

5. School administration participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority.

6. Leadership is promoted and nurtured among staff.

7. Decision making takes place through committees and communication across grade and subject areas.

8. Teachers and administration assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.

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**PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLANS**

For the purpose of this survey Professional Growth Plans (PGPs) are defined as: a process that enables teachers to create personalized goals to facilitate the continual application of newly acquired knowledge and skills that are beneficial to both teacher and student learning (adapted from *The Educator’s Professional Growth Plan* by Jodi Peine)

Directions: Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below by marking any one of the five responses in the columns on the right side, ranging from (1) “Strongly Disagree” or (5) “Strongly Agree”. Please respond the statements by considering each of the following in your present position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither disagree or agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Professional Growth Plans should be linked individual teacher professional development goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Professional Grow Plans should be linked to school goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Professional Grow Plans should be linked to district goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Professional Growth Plans should be linked to Ministry goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Professional Growth Plans should be a component of teacher evaluations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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After you have completed the survey please place it in the envelope provided and return to the District Resource Center via the District Courier. Please place in the district courier by October 15th. Thank you for participating in this voluntary survey.
APPENDIX D: Letter of Approval Mount Arrowsmith Teachers’ Association

September 7, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to inform you that the Executive Committee of the Mount Arrowsmith Teachers’ Association is aware of the research that Denise Spencer-Dahl is conducting as part of her Masters’ program at VIU, and

That Denise Spencer-Dahl, as co-chairperson of the Mount Arrowsmith In-District Professional Development Committee, is permitted to access members of our association for participation in her research. She also has our approval to use the contact list of professional development representatives to assist in the distribution of her survey.

Please contact me if you have any further questions on this matter.

Sincerely,

D. Horvath

Debbie Morman
President
Mount Arrowsmith Teachers’ Association
SCHOOL DISTRICT No.69 (QUALICUM)

September 20, 2012

Denise Spencer-Dahl
1588 Marine Circle
Parksville, BC
V9P 1Y6

Dear Ms. Dahl:

This letter is to give district approval for your research project entitled "Professional Growth Plans and Teacher Learning."

I understand that your research will invite approximately 200 teachers from the fourteen schools within our school district to participate. Data will be collected on a school-based Professional Development Day based on an anonymous survey.

On behalf of the district, I wish you good luck with your project. I would be interested in reading a copy of your report when it has been completed.

Respectfully,

Jim Ansell
Superintendent of Schools
School District 69 (Qualicum)

JA/hc

Copy: Principals/Vice-principals via email
Personnel File

PO Box 430, 100 Jensen Ave. East, Parksville, B.C. V9P 2G5
Phone (250) 248-4241 Fax (250) 248-5767 www.sd69.bc.ca
APPENDIX F: Letter of permission (REB – Vancouver Island University)

September 14, 2012

Denise Spencer-Dahl
M. Educational Leadership Program
Faculty of Education
Vancouver Island University
900 Fifth Street
Nanaimo, British Columbia V9R 5S5

Dear Ms. Spencer-Dahl:

The Vancouver Island University Research Ethics Board is pleased to grant approval for the project entitled “Professional Growth Plans and Teacher Learning” originally submitted for review on April 19, 2012, and as revised and resubmitted as at September 10, 2012.

Please be aware of your obligation to carry out the research as stated in the revised application and to comply with the regulations of the Schools and School District involved in your research. Guidelines as posted on the VIU REB website at http://www.viu.ca/reb/guidelines.asp must be followed for all submissions.

Sincerely,

Ruth Kirson, Chair
Vancouver Island University Research Ethics Board (VIU REB)

VIU REB Reference No. 2012-029-VIUS-SPENCER-DAHL
Date of Approval September 14, 2012
Date of Expiry September 3, 2013

Please sign the acknowledgement below, retain a copy for your records, and return the original to:

Research Ethics Officer
Bldg. 305 – Rm. 452
Vancouver Island University
Nanaimo, British Columbia V9R 5S5

As researcher(s) I (we) hereby agree to carry out the research in an ethical manner as outlined in the approved proposal submission. If I (we) need to make changes to the methodology and/or recruitment and consent procedures, I (we) will request an amendment from the VIU REB. If the project runs longer than one (1) year, I (we) will submit a request for continuing review (renewal) to the Ethics Officer one (1) month prior to the expiry date indicated above. At the end of the project, I (we) will notify the Ethics Officer to close the study.

Denise Spencer-Dahl, Student, M. Educational Leadership, VIU

Research & Scholarly Activity Office
900 Fifth Street, Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada V9R 5S5 | Ph: 250.740.6196 Fax: 250.740.6256 | viu.ca/research