

**Kansas Learning First Alliance Study of the
Impact on Student Achievement of Quality
Professional Development**

**Challenge and Comparison School
Professional Development Survey Results**

Fall 2003

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	ii
Background	1
Survey Methodology	1
Survey Results	2
Graph 1: At what grade level do you teach?	4
Graph 2: For how many years have you been a teacher?	4
Graph 3: What is the extent of your participation in leadership roles?	5
Graph 4: Overall, how would you rate the benefit of professional development?	5
Table 1: During the current school year, approximately how many times have you engaged in the type of professional development activities described below?	7
Table 2: Please indicate how accurately each statement describes all of your professional development experiences during the current school year.	8
Table 3: How true are the following characteristics of professional development at your school?	11
Table 4: Please mark the three most important characteristics as well as the three greatest strengths of professional development at your school.	14
Table 5: Open-Ended Response Frequencies.	15
Discussion	15
Question 1: How is professional development structured in the schools that are having the greatest impact on student learning?	15
Question 2: Which of the characteristics of professional development thought to define quality are most related to student achievement?	16
Other Findings	17
Correlations	18
Appendix A: Respondent Comments About Professional Development	19

Executive Summary

One of the three goals of the Kansas Learning First Alliance (KLFA) is that “KLFA will plan and facilitate professional development opportunities that support student learning.” To accomplish this goal, KLFA must identify the characteristics of professional development programs that make them most effective. Although there is a great deal of agreement about what characteristics of professional development make it ‘high quality’, there is little evidence about the extent to which these characteristics are related to better teaching and increased student achievement.

To begin gathering evidence of the impact of quality professional development, KLFA designed a study to compare the professional development practices used in the Kansas Challenge Award schools with professional development practices used in lower performing schools with similar student populations. The first phase of that study consisted of the development and administration of a teacher survey, the results of which are summarized here.

The research questions guiding the study are:

1. How is professional development structured in the schools that are having the greatest impact on student learning?
2. Which of the characteristics of professional development thought to define quality (focused, based on needs, sustained with a chance for practice and feedback, and participated in by the majority of the staff) are most related to student achievement in these schools?

Challenge Awards were given to Kansas schools for the first time in the fall of 2002. In order to be considered for the award, a school’s state assessment results in mathematics or reading had to be significantly *higher* than would be expected, given the demographic make-up of the school’s student population (percent of lower socioeconomic status, percent of minority population, and percent with disabilities). Criteria used for selection of the study’s comparison schools were the same as criteria used for selection of the Challenge Award schools with one important exception: the achievement of students in the comparison schools was significantly *lower* than would be expected, given the demographic make-up of the school’s student population.

The Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation developed and ran the programs to select Challenge Award schools and comparison schools. The final list included 126 Challenge Award schools and 130 comparison schools. Each of the 256 schools received survey packets for four teachers that met specified criteria, a total of 1,024 possible participants. The actual number returned was 488, fairly evenly divided between Challenge Award and comparison schools.

Survey Results

Approximately 43 percent of the Comparison School and 29 percent of the Challenge School teachers have had ten years or less of teaching experience. Possibly because of their higher level of teaching experience and/or possibly because of differences in the organization of their schools, Challenge School teachers reported that they had participated in more leadership roles than Comparison School teachers reported they had. Only 14 percent of the Challenge School teachers, compared to 36 percent of the Comparison School teachers, said they had not taken part in a leadership role.

Although differences in the amount of time spent in professional development were not large, when analyzed by each type of professional development, Challenge School teachers participated in significantly more professional development overall. These teachers also rated the benefit of professional development more positively. About 44 percent of the Challenge School teachers, compared to 31 percent of the Comparison School teachers, said that professional development had had a direct, positive effect on their teaching.

No matter in which type of school they taught, teachers did not feel that professional development activities included enough time to think carefully about, try out, and evaluate new ideas; or that professional development had increased their ability to meet diverse student needs. Both groups did think that professional development at their schools was closely connected to the school improvement plan.

When asked to rate 22 characteristics of staff development on how true they were for their own schools, teachers from both types of schools gave the highest rating to statements related to the support for professional development that came from building and district administrators and to a statement about all teachers being part of learning teams. The lowest ratings were given to items related to having enough time to work and plan together. Challenge School teachers were more likely to agree that in their schools learning teams meet at least weekly, the district office is strongly committed to improving teaching through professional development, decisions about professional development are based on data, there are well-planned follow-up activities after professional development, technology is frequently integrated, and teachers and administrators work together to provide relevant professional development that allows teachers to develop deep knowledge of their content.

When asked to rate eleven characteristics of professional development according to importance and current strength at their schools, the greatest difference between importance and strength for both groups of teachers was in opportunities for on-the-job practice of new skills and strategies with feedback and for integrated and coherent professional development, with one activity building on the next. Comparison School teachers showed a large discrepancy between importance and strength regarding focus on instructional content; and Comparison School teachers also displayed a large discrepancy regarding opportunities to observe each other's instruction and provide constructive feedback. When asked to write in other characteristics that Comparison School teachers

thought were important, the most common characteristics mentioned were ensuring teacher involvement and focus and including more time.

Teachers' responses about professional development became less positive with educational level. In other words, elementary teachers were much more positive about professional development quality and relevance and about the support they received for professional development than were high school teachers.

In answer to the study questions, the biggest difference in structure seems to be that teachers in Challenge Schools in general have more teaching experience, are included in leadership roles at a higher rate, meet more regularly, are more likely to base professional development decisions on data, have the support of administrators and are included by administrators in decisions related to professional development, and have more opportunity for follow-up activities. In answer to the second study question regarding which characteristics of professional development are related to achievement, Challenge School teacher means for all of the professional development characteristics items were slightly higher than the Comparison School teacher means.

Recommendations

Data collected from the survey suggests that teachers in Challenge Award schools could provide valuable information about effective professional development characteristics. The second phase of this study should be carried out in order to gather even richer, fuller data regarding effective professional development in these two types of schools.

Follow up on survey results with more extensive and in-depth questioning and analysis to yield more evidence about those professional development characteristics that are related to better teaching and increased student achievement.

Background

One of the three goals of the Kansas Learning First Alliance (KLFA) is the following: KLFA will plan and facilitate professional development opportunities that support student learning. To accomplish this goal, KLFA must identify the characteristics of professional development programs that make them most effective. Although there is a great deal of agreement about what characteristics of professional development make it 'high quality', there is little evidence about the extent to which these characteristics are related to better teaching and increased student achievement. To begin gathering evidence of the impact of quality professional development, KLFA designed a study to compare the professional development practices used in the Kansas Challenge Award schools with professional development practices used in lower performing schools with similar student populations. The study includes two phases of data collection. The first phase is completed and was composed of development and administration of a teacher survey. This paper is a summary of the results of that survey. The second phase will involve data collection through focus groups. Focus group leaders will use survey results to assist with discussions. The research questions guiding the study are –

1. How is professional development structured in the schools that are having the greatest impact on student learning?
2. Which of the characteristics of professional development thought to define quality (focused, based on needs, sustained with a chance for practice and feedback, and participated in by the majority of the staff) are most related to student achievement?

Challenge Awards were given to Kansas schools for the first time in the fall of 2002. In order to be considered for the award, a school's state assessment results in mathematics or reading had to be significantly *higher* than would be expected, given the demographic make-up of the school's student population (percent lower socioeconomic status, percent minority, and percent with disabilities). Criteria used for selection of the study's comparison schools were the same as criteria used for selection of the Challenge Award schools with one important exception: the achievement of students in the comparison schools was significantly *lower* than would be expected, given the demographic make-up of the school's student population.

Survey Methodology

Items on the survey instrument were based on the National Staff Development Council's Standards for Staff Development, the Keys to Excellence for Your Schools, and the Kansas Staff Development Rubric. A KLFA sub-committee worked with the survey developer to ensure that survey items helped answer study questions.

The Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation developed and ran the programs to select Challenge Award schools and comparison schools. The two school groups were combined into one list and then a second set of analyses was conducted. Each school's size and achievement history were examined. Very small schools and schools with very

volatile achievement were eliminated from the study. The final list included 126 Challenge Award schools and 130 comparison schools.

Principals in the 256 schools were sent survey packets and were asked to distribute surveys to four teachers who taught at their schools in non-special education classrooms during the 2001-2002 school year. At the secondary level, principals were given the added instruction that the teachers must be those who taught language arts or mathematics during the prior school year. The maximum number of surveys that could have been completed, if every school had four teachers that met the specified criteria, is 1,024. The actual number returned was 488, fairly evenly divided between Challenge Award and comparison schools. In the results section, results will be shown as coming from a Challenge School or a Comparison School.

Effect sizes were computed for most survey items to test the educational significance of the differences in responses between Challenge and Comparison School staff. The formula used for the computation was $(\text{Challenge School Mean} - \text{Comparison School Mean}) / \text{Total Respondent Group Standard Deviation}$. Effect sizes that are below .4 are small, effect sizes that range from .4 to .75 are medium, and effect sizes above .75 are large.

Three derived scores were computed for the analyses: one for total amount of professional development, one for personal professional development quality, and one for professional development characteristics at respondent's school. To compute the scores, the responses to the relevant items on the survey were recoded so that the highest code was the most positive response. Items in the first section of the survey were then summed to create the amount of professional development score, items in the next section were summed to create the personal quality score, and items in the third section were summed to create the characteristics score. A correlation analysis was run, using these scores as well as the following: whether or not the school was a Challenge School, number of leadership roles held by the respondent, respondent's years of teaching experience, respondent's overall rating of professional development, the grade level taught by the respondent, and the percent of students on free/reduced lunch at the respondent's school.

Survey Results

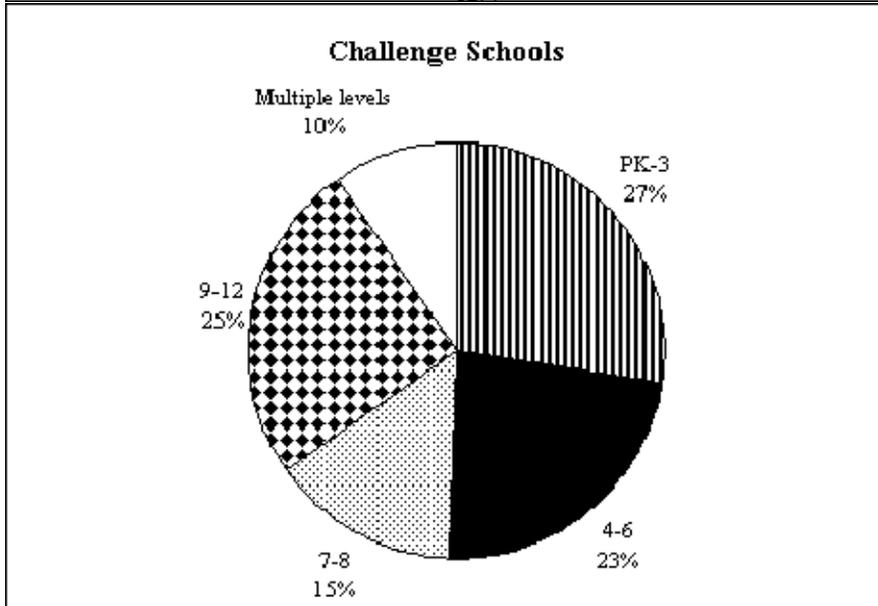
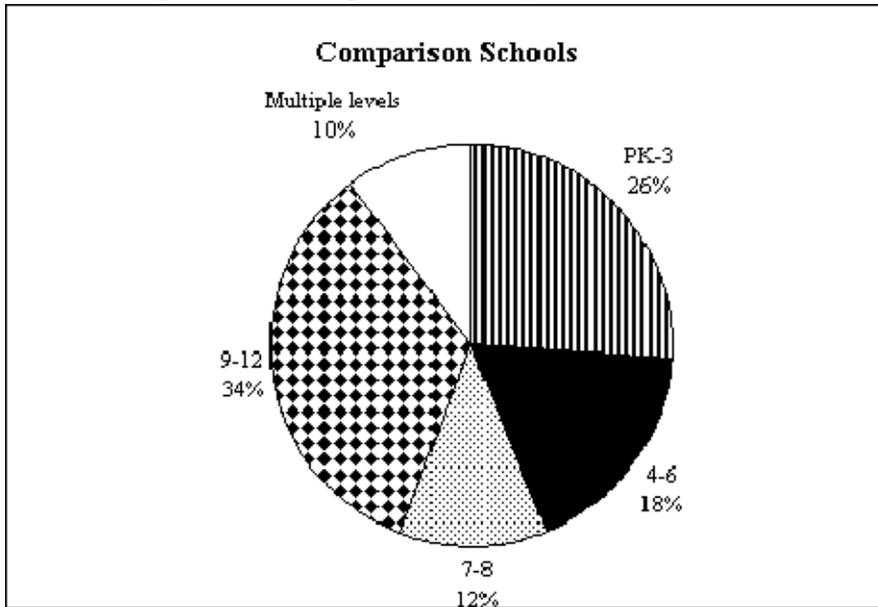
Challenge School and Comparison School teachers responded at a similar rate. Approximately 49 percent of the surveys completed were from Challenge Schools and 51 percent were from Comparison Schools. The mean percent of students on free or reduced price lunch in the respondents' schools was 34 percent for Challenge Schools and 37 percent for Comparison Schools; and the mean school size was 314 for Comparison Schools and 318 for Challenge Schools. Thus, schools were fairly evenly matched on these variables.

A higher percentage of Challenge School than Comparison School respondents taught grades PK-6 (50% and 44%, respectively) and had more than 10 years of teaching

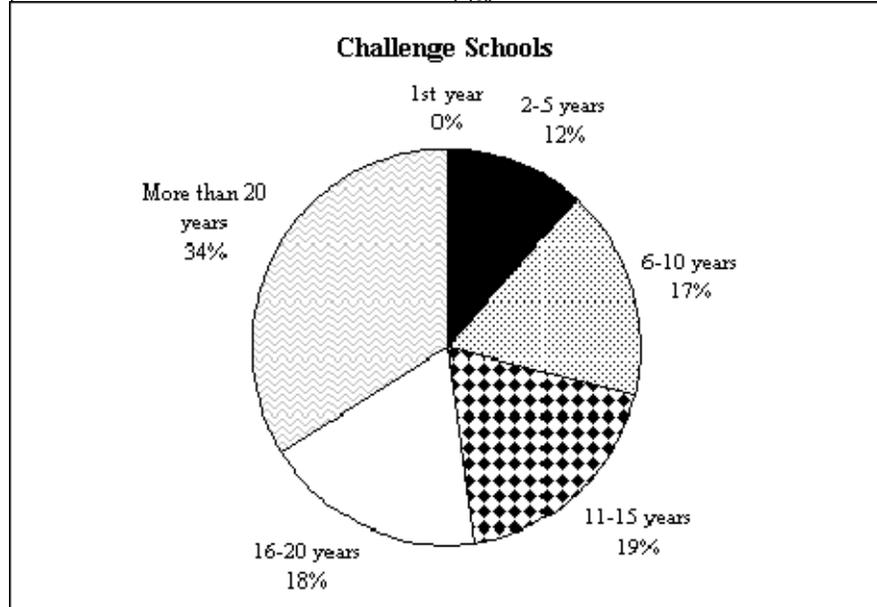
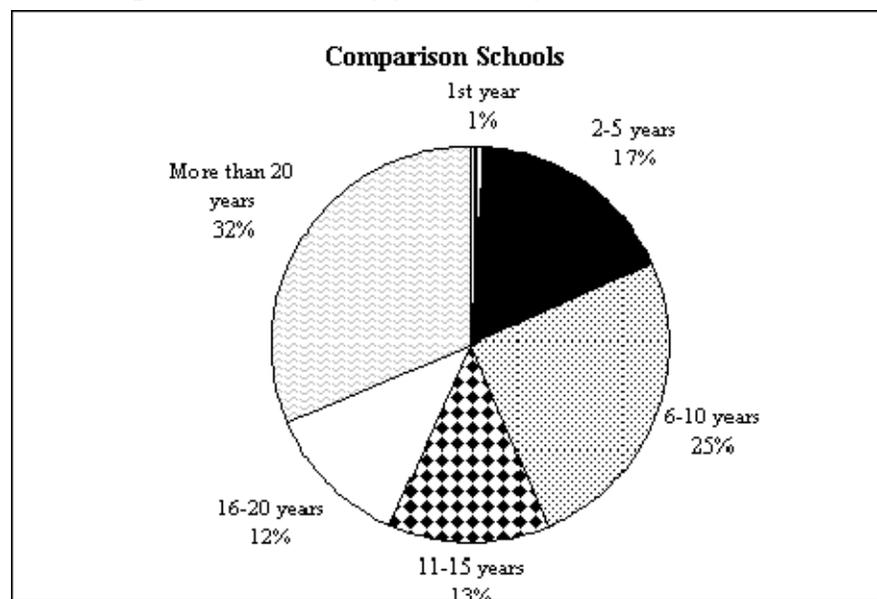
experience (71% and 57%, respectively). (See Graphs 1 and 2.) Years of teaching experience was significantly correlated with whether or not the school was a Challenge School; however grade level was not.

A higher percentage of Challenge School than Comparison School respondents have been involved in at least one leadership role in the last three years, such as Professional Development Council, Site Council, district leadership group, state curriculum/assessment development committee, textbook adoption committee, and/or officer in a state or national education professional organization. The percentages were 86 percent participation for Challenge School respondents and 64 percent for Comparison School participants (Graph 3). Also, more Challenge School respondents than Comparison School respondents indicated that the professional development they had received in the last twelve-month period has had a direct, positive effect on their teaching (44% and 31%, respectively). (See Graph 4.) Both participation in a leadership role and indication of overall impact of professional development were significantly correlated with whether or not the school was a Challenge School.

Graph 1: At what grade level do you teach?

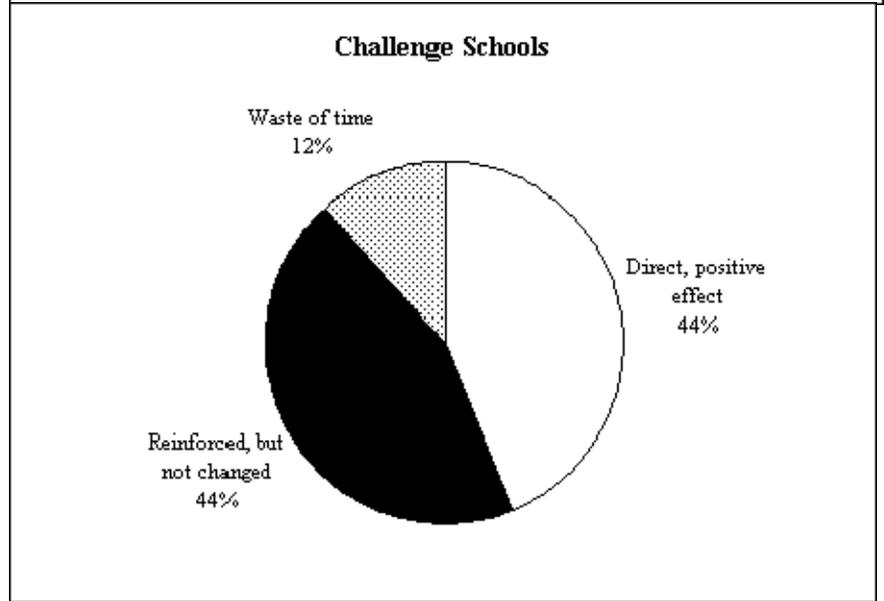
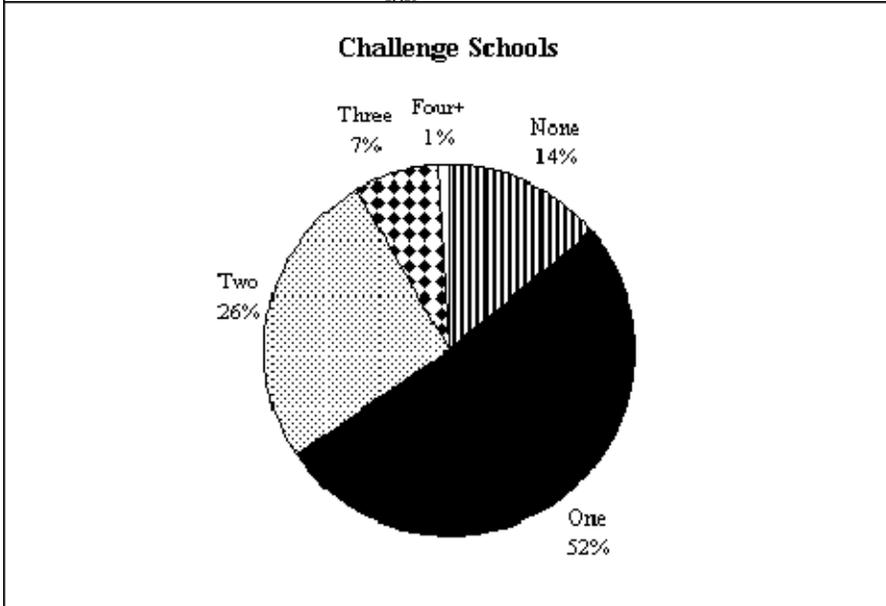
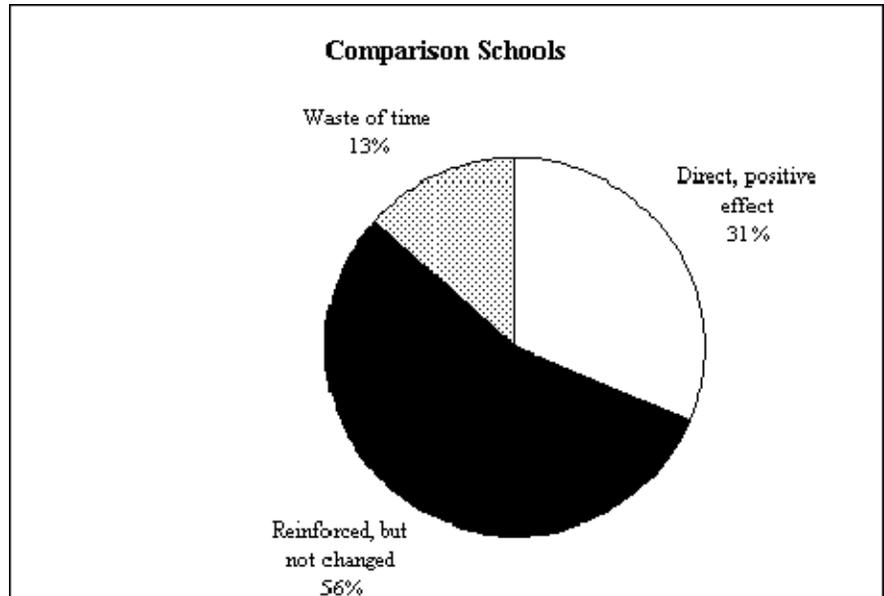
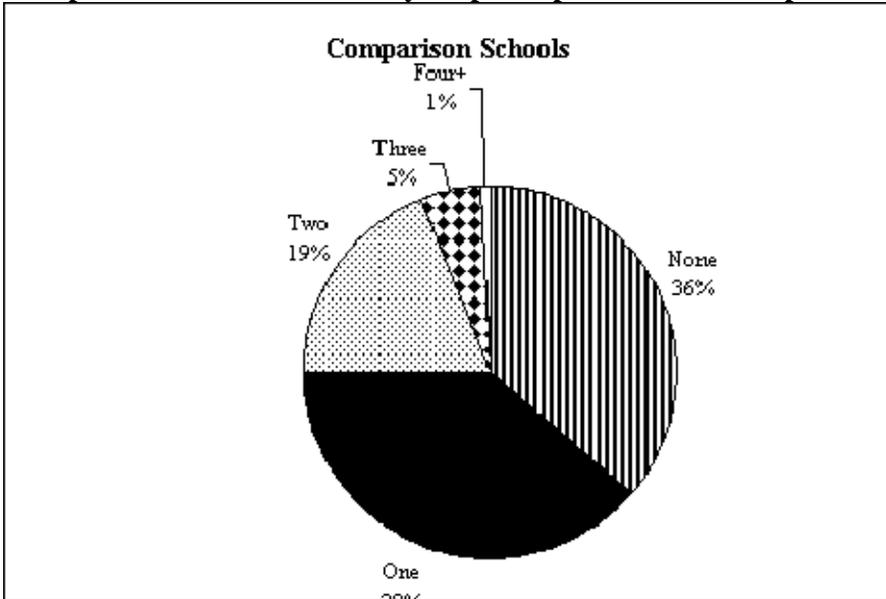


Graph 2: For how many years have you been a teacher?



Graph 3: What is the extent of your participation in leadership roles?

Graph 4: Overall, how would you rate the benefit of professional development?



Meetings, workshops, and conferences of professional organizations; peer observation, peer coaching, and peer feedback; and action research were engaged in only slightly less frequently at Challenge Schools than at Comparison Schools. Engagement in all other types of professional development listed on the survey (regional and state meetings, workshops, and conferences; district sponsored workshops and conferences; collaboration with school staff as a whole to improve curriculum and instruction; mentoring a colleague or being mentored by a colleague in a formal relationship; sessions tied to a specific subject area; sessions tied to translating generic strategies into the context of specific subject areas; school faculty meetings related to instructional issues; and grade level and subject area meetings related to instructional issues) was slightly higher at Challenge Schools. The largest differences between Challenge School and Comparison Schools responses were for the district sponsored workshops/conferences, school faculty meetings related to instructional issues, and grade level or subject area meetings related to instructional issues survey items. Collaboration with school staff as a whole to improve curriculum and instruction and school faculty meetings related to instructional issues were the two professional development activities, according to both groups of respondents, that were engaged in the most amount of time (Table 1). There were no medium or large effect sizes for this set of items. When the items were summed to create the 'total amount of professional development' derived score, the score was significantly correlated (.05 level of significance) with Challenge School/Comparison School designation. Challenge School respondents indicated that they received more professional development than did Comparison School respondents. (See the correlation table on page 18.)

Respondents were asked to indicate how accurately six statements described their professional development experiences during the current school year. In both Comparison and Challenge Schools, respondents agreed the most with the statement that professional development is closely connected to the school's improvement plan. The statement that said that professional development activities included enough time to think carefully about, try out, and evaluate new ideas received the least positive rating. Challenge School respondents agreed at a slightly higher rate that professional development was sustained and coherently focused and that it was instrumental in increasing their knowledge and skills (Table 2). However, effect sizes for these two items were small. Ratings for the items were summed to create the 'personal quality of professional development' derived score. The correlation between this derived score and Challenge School/Comparison School designation was not significant. (See the correlation table on page 18.)

Table 1: During the current school year, approximately how many times have you engaged in the type of professional development activities described below?

		At least once a week		At least monthly		<monthly but <4 times		3-4 times		Once or twice		Never	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Comparison Schools	Meetings of professional organizations	14	5.9%	48	20.1%	34	14.2%	62	25.9%	60	25.1%	21	8.8%
	Regional or state meetings					7	3.0%	24	10.1%	123	51.9%	83	35.0%
	District sponsored workshops			15	6.3%	43	18.0%	117	49.0%	52	21.8%	12	5.0%
	Collaboration with school staff as a whole	35	14.2%	53	21.5%	36	14.6%	72	29.1%	44	17.8%	7	2.8%
	Mentoring a colleague or being mentored	22	8.9%	17	6.9%	17	6.9%	20	8.1%	50	20.3%	120	48.8%
	Sessions tied to a specific subject	11	4.5%	30	12.2%	31	12.7%	63	25.7%	83	33.9%	27	11.0%
	Sessions tied to translating generic strategies	6	2.4%	17	6.9%	20	8.1%	61	24.7%	90	36.4%	53	21.5%
	Peer observation/coaching/feedback	9	3.7%	13	5.4%	17	7.1%	26	10.8%	48	19.9%	128	53.1%
	Faculty meetings related to instruction	14	5.7%	77	31.3%	45	18.3%	44	17.9%	50	20.3%	16	6.5%
	Grade level meetings related to instruction	25	10.2%	36	14.8%	28	11.5%	49	20.1%	76	31.1%	30	12.3%
	Action research	10	4.1%	23	9.5%	25	10.3%	34	14.0%	59	24.3%	92	37.9%
Challenge Schools	Meetings of professional organizations	18	7.5%	61	25.5%	24	10.0%	33	13.8%	66	27.6%	37	15.5%
	Regional or state meetings			4	1.7%	10	4.2%	31	13.0%	107	44.8%	87	36.4%
	District sponsored workshops			33	13.8%	63	26.4%	89	37.2%	40	16.7%	14	5.9%
	Collaboration with school staff as a whole	30	12.6%	64	26.8%	53	22.2%	59	24.7%	29	12.1%	4	1.7%
	Mentoring a colleague or being mentored	25	10.5%	28	11.8%	16	6.8%	28	11.8%	36	15.2%	104	43.9%
	Sessions tied to a specific subject	4	1.7%	41	17.3%	39	16.5%	68	28.7%	73	30.8%	12	5.1%
	Sessions tied to translating generic strategies	4	1.7%	17	7.2%	33	13.9%	54	22.8%	85	35.9%	44	18.6%
	Peer observation/coaching/feedback	10	4.3%	12	5.2%	15	6.5%	23	9.9%	43	18.5%	129	55.6%
	Faculty meetings related to instruction	13	5.4%	92	38.3%	65	27.1%	37	15.4%	26	10.8%	7	2.9%
	Grade level meetings related to instruction	29	12.1%	44	18.4%	35	14.6%	54	22.6%	56	23.4%	21	8.8%
	Action research	14	5.9%	12	5.1%	29	12.3%	31	13.1%	66	28.0%	84	35.6%

	Comparison			Challenge			Total			Effect Size
	Mean	N	SD	Mean	N	SD	Mean	N	SD	
Meetings of professional organizations	3.71	239	1.41	3.75	239	1.63	3.73	478	1.52	0.03
Regional or state meetings	5.19	237	0.73	5.10	239	0.90	5.14	476	0.82	-0.11
District sponsored workshops	4.01	239	0.92	3.74	239	1.08	3.88	478	1.01	-0.27
Collaboration with school staff as a whole	3.23	247	1.41	3.02	239	1.29	3.13	486	1.36	-0.15
Mentoring a colleague or being mentored	4.70	246	1.68	4.41	237	1.80	4.56	483	1.75	-0.17
Sessions tied to a specific subject	4.05	245	1.34	3.85	237	1.23	3.95	482	1.29	-0.16
Sessions tied to translating generic strategies	4.50	247	1.25	4.40	237	1.24	4.45	484	1.24	-0.08
Peer observation/coaching/feedback	4.97	241	1.42	5.00	232	1.44	4.99	473	1.43	0.02
Faculty meetings related to instruction	3.35	246	1.42	2.97	240	1.21	3.16	486	1.33	-0.29
Grade level meetings related to instruction	3.84	244	1.55	3.53	239	1.53	3.69	483	1.55	-0.20
Action research	4.58	243	1.51	4.59	236	1.49	4.59	479	1.50	0.01

Table 2: Please indicate how accurately each statement describes all of your professional development experiences during the current school year.

		True		More true than false		More false than true		False	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Comparison Schools	Sustained & coherently focused	49	19.9%	129	52.4%	59	24.0%	9	3.7%
	Enough time to think, try out, evaluate	37	15.1%	105	42.9%	89	36.3%	14	5.7%
	Closely connected to improvement plan	136	54.8%	95	38.3%	13	5.2%	4	1.6%
	Opportunities to work productively with other staff	63	25.9%	111	45.7%	61	25.1%	8	3.3%
	Instrumental in increasing my knowledge and skills	57	23.4%	108	44.3%	54	22.1%	25	10.2%
	Increased my ability to meet diverse students needs	45	18.2%	117	47.4%	67	27.1%	18	7.3%
Challenge Schools	Sustained & coherently focused	65	27.1%	113	47.1%	54	22.5%	8	3.3%
	Enough time to think, try out, evaluate	44	18.5%	100	42.0%	69	29.0%	25	10.5%
	Closely connected to improvement plan	128	54.0%	98	41.4%	9	3.8%	2	0.8%
	Opportunities to work productively with other staff	81	33.8%	90	37.5%	57	23.8%	12	5.0%
	Instrumental in increasing my knowledge and skills	71	29.6%	95	39.6%	57	23.8%	17	7.1%
	Increased my ability to meet diverse students needs	42	17.5%	115	47.9%	63	26.3%	20	8.3%

	Comparison			Challenge			Total			Effect Size
	Mean	N	SD	Mean	N	SD	Mean	N	SD	
Sustained & coherently focused	2.11	246	0.76	2.02	240	0.80	2.07	486	0.78	-0.12
Enough time to think, try out, evaluate	2.33	245	0.80	2.32	238	0.89	2.32	483	0.85	-0.01
Closely connected to improvement plan	1.54	248	0.67	1.51	237	0.62	1.53	485	0.64	-0.05
Opportunities to work productively with other staff	2.06	243	0.80	2.00	240	0.88	2.03	483	0.84	-0.07
Instrumental in increasing my knowledge and skills	2.19	244	0.91	2.08	240	0.90	2.14	484	0.91	-0.12
Increased my ability to meet diverse students needs	2.23	247	0.83	2.25	240	0.84	2.24	487	0.84	0.02

Respondents were asked to rate 22 characteristics of professional development. The most positive ratings were given to the following statements: School administrators support teachers as teachers apply what they learned in professional development; the district office is strongly committed to the continuous improvement of teaching through professional development; and all educators are part of school-based learning teams. The least positive ratings were given to the following: staff are given time each week to work on individual professional development plans; and learning teams meet at least weekly to examine student work, plan instruction, and solve problems. Challenge School respondents gave slightly more positive ratings to every characteristic item, but there were no medium or large effect size differences. There were seven items for which differences between Challenge and Comparison School ratings were larger than for other items: learning teams meet at least weekly to examine student work, plan instruction, and solve problems; the district office is strongly committed to the continuous improvement of teaching through professional development; decisions regarding what professional development to offer are based on systematically gathered data; there are well-planned follow-up activities incorporated into most staff development initiatives; technology is frequently integrated to support and monitor staff learning; school administrators and teachers work together to provide relevant professional development experiences, and staff are given many professional development opportunities to develop deep knowledge of their content. (See Table 3.)

A third derived score was obtained through summing the reversed scores for the 'characteristic' items. The correlation between this derived score and the Challenge School/Comparison School designation was significant, at the .01 level of significance. (See the correlation table on page 18.)

In addition to the significant correlations mentioned previously, there were significant positive correlations among the three derived scores (.01); significant positive correlations between each of the derived scores and the overall rating of professional development (.01); significant negative correlations between each of the derived scores and grade levels taught by the respondents (.01); a significant negative correlation between the overall rating of professional development and grade levels taught by the respondents (.01); and a significant positive correlation between percent of free/reduced price lunch students in a building and the amount of professional development engaged in derived score (.01). Also, the Challenge School/Comparison School designation was significantly correlated with total number of leadership roles (.01), years of teaching experience (.05), and overall rating of professional development (.05). Challenge School respondents had held the most leadership roles, had more teaching experience, and were more satisfied overall with their professional development experiences.

Respondents were given a list of eleven characteristics of professional development and asked to mark the list in two ways. In the first column, they were to indicate the three characteristics that they felt were most important to effective professional development. In the second column, they were to indicate the three characteristics that were the greatest strengths at their schools. In Comparison Schools, the characteristics marked as most important with the greatest frequency were a focus on teaching strategies, opportunities for

on-the-job practice of new skills and strategies (with feedback), and opportunities for staff to work together in collaborative teams. For Challenge School respondents, the most important characteristics were a focus on teaching strategies, planned based on an analysis of school data and a review of recent research, and opportunities for staff to work together in collaborative teams. A focus on teaching strategies, planned based on an analysis of school data and a review of recent research, and strong administrative commitment were selected most frequently by Challenge and Comparison Schools as the greatest strengths at their schools. The items that were marked as important at a much higher frequency than they were marked as a strength were—

Comparison Schools

1. Focused on instructional content,
2. Includes opportunities for on-the-job practice of new skills and strategies, and
3. Integrated and coherent with one activity building on the next

Challenge Schools

1. Includes opportunities for on-the-job practice of new skills and strategies,
2. Integrated and coherent with one activity building on the next, and
3. Includes opportunities to observe each other’s instruction and provide constructive feedback (Table 4)

Respondents were allowed to write in other characteristics that they thought were important. The list of added characteristics is shown below.

Other Important Characteristics

- Occurs between 8-3
- Most of the above very important-it has to be a group cooperative effort
- Staff buy-in
- Include time to think, plan and evaluate how to incorporate what I am learning into my classroom
- Is least intrusive. I have a master’s and 35 hours. Am I not NOW a freakin’ professional?!!??
- Supports QPA/SIP
- Focuses on diversity of students and teaching “community” as well as character traits
- Staff morale
- More teacher focus
- Technology focused (2 respondents)
- Most relevant professional development is offered at Southeast Kansas Education Service Center
- Provides a great deal of time to do paperwork.
- Most teachers are self-driven
- School Improvement Plan
- Committee of teachers and administrators plan activities
- Comes from teachers who use it effectively
- None of the above

Table 3: How true are the following characteristics of professional development at your school?

		True		More true than false		More false than true		False	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Comparison Schools	All educators are part of learning teams	106	44.4%	75	31.4%	34	14.2%	24	10.0%
	Learning teams meet at least weekly	24	9.9%	42	17.3%	63	25.9%	114	46.9%
	Calendars & schedules support prof. learning	57	23.8%	97	40.4%	66	27.5%	20	8.3%
	Administrators support teachers as they apply new learning	101	41.9%	112	46.5%	24	10.0%	4	1.7%
	District office is strongly committed to prof. dev.	78	32.4%	117	48.5%	34	14.1%	12	5.0%
	Staff are given time each week to work on prof. dev.	20	8.2%	34	13.9%	66	27.0%	124	50.8%
	Decisions regarding what to offer are based on data	26	11.0%	97	41.1%	82	34.7%	31	13.1%
	Data are disaggregated	55	23.2%	94	39.7%	68	28.7%	20	8.4%
	Teams regularly study research prior to adopting strategies	30	12.5%	97	40.4%	78	32.5%	35	14.6%
	Data are collected to determine the effects of changes	33	13.8%	106	44.2%	79	32.9%	22	9.2%
	Expectations are set before prof. dev. is held	37	15.5%	121	50.6%	57	23.8%	24	10.0%
	Data are collected to determine if prof. dev. achieved outcomes	41	17.1%	91	37.9%	84	35.0%	24	10.0%
	There are well-planned follow up activities	18	7.3%	66	26.9%	113	46.1%	48	19.6%
	Technology is frequently integrated to support/monitor PD	47	19.3%	80	32.9%	87	35.8%	29	11.9%
	PD options accommodate different learning styles & experiences	29	11.9%	87	35.7%	98	40.2%	30	12.3%
	Administrators and teachers work together	48	19.8%	121	49.8%	54	22.2%	20	8.2%
	Educators receive training to become skillful group members	37	15.2%	102	41.8%	77	31.6%	28	11.5%
	Staff are given many opportunities to develop deep content know.	39	16.1%	77	31.8%	94	38.8%	32	13.2%
	PD has expanded my knowledge of instructional methods	62	25.5%	118	48.6%	53	21.8%	10	4.1%
	Most PD experiences build on one another	37	15.4%	92	38.2%	88	36.5%	24	10.0%
PD has enabled staff to work more collaboratively with parents	20	8.3%	74	30.6%	105	43.4%	43	17.8%	
PD has enabled teachers to effectively monitor achievement	46	18.9%	119	49.0%	57	23.5%	21	8.6%	

Table 3 cont.: How true are the following characteristics of professional development at your school?

		True		More true than false		More false than true		False	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Challenge Schools	All educators are part of learning teams	126	52.5%	68	28.3%	33	13.8%	13	5.4%
	Learning teams meet at least weekly	34	14.2%	55	23.0%	65	27.2%	85	35.6%
	Calendars & schedules support prof. learning	72	31.3%	90	39.1%	50	21.7%	18	7.8%
	Administrators support teachers as they apply new learning	118	49.6%	102	42.9%	15	6.3%	3	1.3%
	District office is strongly committed to prof. dev.	117	48.8%	92	38.3%	22	9.2%	9	3.8%
	Staff are given time each week to work on prof. dev.	18	7.6%	43	18.2%	73	30.9%	102	43.2%
	Decisions regarding what to offer are based on data	52	22.4%	99	42.7%	54	23.3%	27	11.6%
	Data are disaggregated	80	33.9%	88	37.3%	44	18.6%	24	10.2%
	Teams regularly study research prior to adopting strategies	48	20.3%	100	42.2%	62	26.2%	27	11.4%
	Data are collected to determine the effects of changes	50	20.9%	106	44.4%	63	26.4%	20	8.4%
	Expectations are set before prof. dev. is held	52	21.8%	110	46.2%	52	21.8%	24	10.1%
	Data are collected to determine if prof. dev. achieved outcomes	49	20.5%	95	39.7%	69	28.9%	26	10.9%
	There are well-planned follow up activities	32	13.5%	84	35.4%	81	34.2%	40	16.9%
	Technology is frequently integrated to support/monitor PD	43	17.9%	126	52.5%	52	21.7%	19	7.9%
	PD options accommodate different learning styles & experiences	35	14.7%	104	43.7%	73	30.7%	26	10.9%
	Administrators and teachers work together	83	34.7%	99	41.4%	40	16.7%	17	7.1%
	Educators receive training to become skillful group members	52	21.9%	107	45.1%	57	24.1%	21	8.9%
	Staff are given many opportunities to develop deep content know.	56	23.5%	92	38.7%	72	30.3%	18	7.6%
	PD has expanded my knowledge of instructional methods	76	31.8%	114	47.7%	35	14.6%	14	5.9%
	Most PD experiences build on one another	44	18.6%	112	47.3%	66	27.8%	15	6.3%
PD has enabled staff to work more collaboratively with parents	27	11.3%	84	35.0%	96	40.0%	33	13.8%	
PD has enabled teachers to effectively monitor achievement	52	21.8%	112	47.1%	53	22.3%	21	8.8%	

Table 3 cont: How true are the following characteristics of professional development at your school?

	Comparison			Challenge			Total			Effect Size
	Mean	N	SD	Mean	N	SD	Mean	N	SD	
All educators are part of learning teams	1.90	239	0.99	1.72	240	0.90	1.81	479	0.95	-0.19
Learning teams meet at least weekly	3.10	243	1.02	2.84	239	1.07	2.97	482	1.05	-0.25
Calendars & schedules support prof. learning	2.20	240	0.90	2.06	230	0.92	2.13	470	0.91	-0.15
Administrators support teachers as they apply new learning	1.71	241	0.71	1.59	238	0.67	1.65	479	0.69	-0.17
District office is strongly committed to prof. dev.	1.92	241	0.81	1.68	240	0.79	1.80	481	0.81	-0.30
Staff are given time each week to work on prof. dev.	3.20	244	0.97	3.10	236	0.96	3.15	480	0.96	-0.10
Decisions regarding what to offer are based on data	2.50	236	0.86	2.24	232	0.93	2.37	468	0.90	-0.29
Data are disaggregated	2.22	237	0.90	2.05	236	0.97	2.14	473	0.94	-0.18
Teams regularly study research prior to adopting strategies	2.49	240	0.89	2.29	237	0.92	2.39	477	0.91	-0.22
Data are collected to determine the effects of changes	2.38	240	0.83	2.22	239	0.87	2.30	479	0.86	-0.19
Expectations are set before prof. dev. is held	2.28	239	0.85	2.20	238	0.90	2.24	477	0.87	-0.09
Data are collected to determine if prof. dev. achieved outcomes	2.38	240	0.88	2.30	239	0.92	2.34	479	0.90	-0.09
There are well-planned follow up activities	2.78	245	0.85	2.54	237	0.93	2.66	482	0.89	-0.27
Technology is frequently integrated to support/monitor PD	2.40	243	0.93	2.20	240	0.82	2.30	483	0.89	-0.23
PD options accommodate different learning styles & experiences	2.53	244	0.86	2.38	238	0.87	2.45	482	0.87	-0.17
Administrators and teachers work together	2.19	243	0.85	1.96	239	0.90	2.08	482	0.88	-0.26
Educators receive training to become skillful group members	2.39	244	0.88	2.20	237	0.88	2.30	481	0.89	-0.21
Staff are given many opportunities to develop deep content know.	2.49	242	0.92	2.22	238	0.89	2.36	480	0.91	-0.30
PD has expanded my knowledge of instructional methods	2.05	243	0.80	1.95	239	0.84	2.00	482	0.82	-0.12
Most PD experiences build on one another	2.41	241	0.87	2.22	237	0.82	2.32	478	0.85	-0.22
PD has enabled staff to work more collaboratively with parents	2.71	242	0.86	2.56	240	0.87	2.63	482	0.86	-0.17
PD has enabled teachers to effectively monitor achievement	2.22	243	0.85	2.18	238	0.87	2.20	481	0.86	-0.05

Table 4: Please mark the three most important characteristics as well as the three greatest strengths of professional dev. at your school.

		Most Important Characteristics		Strengths at This School		Importance Minus Strength At School
		Count	%	Count	%	
Comparison Schools	Focused on instructional content	88	35.5%	65	26.2%	9.3%
	Focused on teaching strategies	112	45.2%	105	42.3%	2.9%
	Scheduled at regular times during the week	20	8.1%	44	17.7%	-9.6%
	Opportunities for practice with feedback	94	37.9%	30	12.1%	25.8%
	Planned based on data analysis & recent research	76	30.6%	107	43.1%	-12.5%
	Opportunities to work in collaborative teams	90	36.3%	97	39.1%	-2.8%
	Opportunities to observe & provide feedback	28	11.3%	10	4.0%	7.3%
	Teachers help determine focus	78	31.5%	77	31.0%	0.5%
	Strong administrative commitment	67	27.0%	107	43.1%	-16.1%
	Systematically evaluated	34	13.7%	20	8.1%	5.6%
	Integrated & coherent	53	21.4%	17	6.9%	14.5%
	Other	4	1.6%	11	4.4%	-2.8%
Challenge Schools	Focused on instructional content	82	34.2%	60	25.0%	9.2%
	Focused on teaching strategies	112	46.7%	124	51.7%	-5.0%
	Scheduled at regular times during the week	23	9.6%	34	14.2%	-4.6%
	Opportunities for practice with feedback	79	32.9%	21	8.8%	24.1%
	Planned based on data analysis & recent research	90	37.5%	122	50.8%	-13.3%
	Opportunities to work in collaborative teams	94	39.2%	89	37.1%	2.1%
	Opportunities to observe & provide feedback	35	14.6%	7	2.9%	11.7%
	Teachers help determine focus	75	31.3%	70	29.2%	2.1%
	Strong administrative commitment	48	20.0%	109	45.4%	-25.4%
	Systematically evaluated	35	14.6%	19	7.9%	6.7%
	Integrated & coherent	51	21.3%	17	7.1%	14.2%
	Other	8	3.3%	6	2.5%	0.8%

There was one open-ended item on the survey. Respondents were asked to respond to the following: If it has made a difference, briefly describe how the professional development you have received has contributed to increased student learning in your classroom. Nearly all respondents felt that classroom relevant professional development is valuable, although a few long for more time for collaboration and for practicing new skills and others do not believe that their Boards or central offices adequately support professional development. The majority reported that they have improved their instruction and/or have seen improved student achievement as a result of professional development. More Comparison School respondents made comments about the need for additional time for practice and collaboration. More Challenge School respondents reported that they have seen increases in student achievement resulting from professional development (Table 5). Complete responses are shown in Appendix A.

Table 5: Open-Ended Response Frequencies

Category	Challenge		Comparison	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Teachers need time to plan/implement strategies learned in professional development.	2	3	5	7
Professional development is valuable if it is usable and applicable in the classroom: connected and relevant to what teachers do.	47	61	38	54
Professional development allows teachers to stay current on latest research and strategies and gives them information for development of new strategies and/or instructional change in the future.	5	6	1	1
It is important for teachers to have time to collaborate/mentor/observe other teachers.	3	4	10	14
There has been an increase in student scores and/or achievement as a direct result of professional development.	14	18	6	8
Professional development is not that helpful or is not supported by the BOE/superintendent.	6	8	11	15

Discussion

There were two overriding research questions that focused survey development. Effect sizes and correlation analyses were used with survey data and school demographic data to answer the questions.

Question 1: How is professional development structured in the schools that are having the greatest impact on student learning?

There were no medium or large effect sizes when professional development characteristic and type/amount of professional development data were analyzed by school type (Challenge or Comparison School). However, average Challenge School respondent ratings for each of the professional development characteristic items were more positive than average Comparison

School ratings. Challenge School Respondents indicated that they received slightly more professional development in the form of regional and state meetings; district sponsored workshops; collaboration with school staff as a whole; mentoring a colleague or being mentored by a colleague; sessions tied to a specific subject area; faculty meetings related to instruction; and grade level meetings related to instruction. Differences between Challenge and Comparison Schools on the other professional development types were very slight.

The types of professional development engaged in the least, regardless of whether the school was a Challenge School or Comparison School, were regional and state meetings and peer observation/coaching/feedback. Those engaged in the most were collaboration with school staff as a whole and faculty meetings related to instruction.

Two of the three derived scores--total amount of professional development and professional development characteristics at respondent's school--relate most directly to question 1. The Challenge School/Comparison School distinction is significantly correlated (correlation table on page 18) with total amount of professional development engaged in during last school year and with characteristics of professional development at respondents' schools. Challenge school respondents indicated that they were engaged in more professional development activities; and they agreed at a higher rate that the list of quality professional development characteristics describe professional development at their schools. The characteristic items which had the greatest differences, when data were analyzed by whether or not the respondent was from a Challenge School, were learning teams meet at least weekly; the district office is strongly committed to professional development; decisions regarding what professional development to offer are based on data; there are well-planned follow up activities; technology is frequently integrated to support and monitor professional development; administrators and teachers work together; and staff are given many opportunities to develop deep knowledge of their content.

In addition to the significant correlations mentioned above, Challenge School/Comparison School membership is significantly correlated with years of teaching, extent of teacher participation in leadership roles, and respondent overall rating of professional development. Challenge School respondents had the highest average years of teaching, number of leadership role experiences, and ratings of professional development.

Question 2: Which of the characteristics of professional development thought to define quality (focused, based on needs, sustained with a chance for practice and feedback, and participated in by the majority of the staff) are most related to student achievement?

One of the three derived scores, personal professional development quality, relates directly to question 2. Challenge School/Comparison School designation is not significantly correlated with this quality score. Within both groups of teachers, there was most agreement that their professional development experiences during the current school year have been closely connected to their school's improvement plan and least agreement that their professional development experiences had included enough time to think carefully about, try out, and evaluate new ideas. More teachers in both groups selected focused on instructional content and

includes opportunities for staff to work together in collaborative teams as the most important characteristics of professional development; and selected focused on instructional content, planned based on an analysis of school data and a review of recent research, and has strong administrative commitment as the strengths of professional development at their schools. Also, for both sets of schools, the greatest discrepancies between the percent of teachers who marked an item as important and the percent who marked an item as a strength were for includes opportunities for on-the-job practice of new skills and strategies; and is integrated and coherent, with one activity building on the next. A higher percentage of Challenge School respondents indicated that professional development, which is planned based on an analysis of school data, is important; and that such professional development is a strength at their schools.

Other Findings

There were other findings that do not speak specifically to the two questions. The percent of students in the school enrolled in the free/reduced lunch program is positively correlated with amount of engagement in professional development activities. That is, the higher the percent of lower SES students in the school, the more opportunities for professional development, regardless of whether the school is a Challenge School. Grade level taught by the respondents was negatively correlated with the overall rating of professional development and with the three derived scores. The higher the grade level taught, the lower the (1) amount of professional development, (2) quality of personal professional development, and (3) number of characteristics of professional development at the respondents' schools. Also, the higher the grade level taught, the less likely the respondent was to report that professional development has had a direct, positive effect on his/her teaching.

Average years of teaching experience and average number of leadership roles held by teachers were significantly higher in Challenge Schools. In addition, Challenge School teachers were more likely to say that professional development has had a direct, positive effect on their teaching.

Correlations

		Challenge School group	Sum of PD characteristics	Sum of PD quality	Sum of PD experiences	# of leadership roles	Years of teaching	Overall rating of PD	Grade level	School Pct. Free/Red. in school
Challenge School group	Pearson Correlation									
	Sig. (2-tailed)									
	N									
Sum of PD characteristics	Pearson Correlation	.151**								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001								
	N	485								
Sum of PD quality	Pearson Correlation	.046	.749**							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.306	.000							
	N	488	485							
Sum of PD experiences	Pearson Correlation	.111*	.548**	.522**						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.000	.000						
	N	488	485	488						
# of leadership roles	Pearson Correlation	.192**	.052	.025	.084					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.250	.578	.063					
	N	488	485	488	488					
Years of teaching	Pearson Correlation	.115*	.028	.055	-.003	.097*				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.537	.230	.951	.032				
	N	484	482	484	484	484				
Overall rating of PD	Pearson Correlation	.106*	.634**	.585**	.425**	.043	.090			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.000	.000	.000	.356	.055			
	N	456	454	456	456	456	453			
Grade level	Pearson Correlation	-.067	-.222**	-.239**	-.264**	-.019	-.091*	-.303**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.144	.000	.000	.000	.682	.048	.000		
	N	474	472	474	474	474	474	444		
School Pct. Free/Red. in school	Pearson Correlation	-.078	.097	.108*	.137**	.022	-.039	.077	-.244**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.124	.057	.034	.007	.671	.441	.142	.000	
	N	387	385	387	387	387	385	361	377	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: Before the derived variables were created and the correlation table was developed, ratings for the engagement, personal quality, and characteristic sections of the survey were reversed, as were the ratings for the overall impact of professional development item. For example, ratings for engagement were changed from 1=At least once a week through 6=Never to the reversed ratings of 1=Never through 6=At least once a week.

Appendix A

Respondent Comments About Professional Development

If it has made a difference, briefly describe how the professional development you have received has contributed to increased student learning in your classroom.

Professional Development Comments

Themes and Comments

1. Teachers need time to plan/implement strategies learned in professional development.

Challenge School	Comparison School
Time to plan; time to evaluate what I do to apply strategies and content to improve before implementing again.	It has helped tremendously to have Wed. release time to meet in SLC's. There we plan visit, look at scores, student work, share ideas, and handle discipline. Without the time to collaborate, I'm afraid our efforts would fail.
Professional development has helped me determine/develop new instructional strategies (i.e. differential learning, brain research, etc.), as well as developing my ability with technology. My issue is having the time and support to sift out what 'works for me' and the time to develop implementation. It's too easy to fall back on 'tried and true' without time and support to develop new methodology.	We need opportunities and time. Time is an enormous issue for me. I don't have time to work with other teachers to integrate teaching to mentor each other etc. I believe more and more that teachers should work (and be paid in accordance to additional time) year round with maybe one month in the summer. The additional time in the summer should be used for professional development and planning, integrating etc. What good teachers could do together with time to plan for the future.
	Professional development has shown me new ways to present my material to my classes. I wish that we had more time to work with each other and talk about some successful strategies.
	I am allowed to attend workshops of my choice throughout each year. This makes me a better educator. I am very self-driven but wish I had more time for planning.
	Actually, there is too much thrown in front of us, no time to ponder and by the time that I start really seeing a difference the state changes its standards or mind and it cycles all over again.

2. Professional development is valuable if it is usable and applicable in the classroom: connected and relevant to what teachers do.

Challenge School	Comparison School
When I attend professional development workshops (school, district or state) I want something I can walk into my classroom and use, not theories.	By far the most informative and relevant professional development is offered by our local education service center (SEK) they offer quality workshops that are often accompanied by software or equipment along with technical service.
Since we have integrated our School Improvement Model with professional development the training opportunities have been more connected and relevant. Next year we will be integrating our professional development with our NCA goals.	PRAIRY training
In recent years our school population has changed dramatically. We have a more ethnic population. Therefore, some of our professional development has focused on how to effectively reach this population.	Powerschool has improved the student's interest in their grades. The 9-week and semester grades are updated instantly. The in-service that we attended was helpful in implementing this new technology.
Our district has different "needs" at the different elementary buildings yet all professional development is the same. I realize some things have to be cohesive throughout a district, but our professional development should be directly tied to the goals of our NCA plan.	Learning new strategies for teaching lessons keeping teachers focused.
Our focus has been ESL since we have had an influx of Spanish speaking children and families. I've attended 2 workshops with this emphasis. The second one was extremely helpful. It gave us a book presenting all the strategies she demonstrated. We went home feeling we had all received applicable ideas from K-6 grades. In fact, we knew that all of our students would benefit from what we'd learned.	Going to Kagan training has allowed me to incorporate small group learning instruction, active engagement of 100% of my class and guarantee that all students "know" the material through focused use of materials time and instruction to maximize learning potential! Learning is fun and my workload is decreased. My thanks to my district!
The district support for professional development has been most beneficial for learning how to work with ELL students. The district encouraged further training with support of tuition. These classes not only benefit the ELL student but also help the teacher support the struggling student who might otherwise "fall through the cracks."	In a previous district professional development was based on individual need, which was good. I gained knowledge in cooperative learning, problem based teacher and kinesthetic methods of instruction. All have given me a way to improve student retention.
Test prep class to teach teachers about what is on state assessments not given at their level (i.e. 4 th grade teachers learn about questions on the 5 th grade reading assessment).	Using various reading strategies met the various learning styles within my classroom.
Quantum learning is a program designed to strengthen classroom management and student learning. It incorporates music, student behavior, learning mnemonics to make students successful.	Learning strategies offer a variety of instructional methods to teach different students with different learning styles.

Challenge School	Comparison School
<p>The staff development I received in regard to the Direct Instruction Reading Program was very helpful. It demonstrated how to teach the program. The students have been very successful.</p>	<p>Workshops/seminars enhanced my teaching by adding to ideas I already use to help my students learn about oral and written communications. Students learned not to plagiarize as they used the Internet and search engines to help them research for speeches and written papers. Students learned how to read expository writing as well as persuasive and narrative genres. They added to their expertise of incorporating technical writing with their projects and assignments. They focus more closely on their writing with 6-trait rubric to help them. Writing across the curriculum was greatly enhanced.</p>
<p>As an English teacher, I'm constantly looking for ways to provide kids with a more practical experience. For example I have implemented technical writing after a tremendous in-service followed by a visit to Texas Tech. Both experiences were strongly supported by our administration</p>	<p>Professional development ties directly to teaching strategies used to improve student learning.</p>
<p>Primarily, our focus has been on integrating technology into our classroom to evaluate students to improve on all areas. Much of the professional development I received during this year was in this field.</p>	<p>Technology training-assist students with technology/instructional materials. State Standards info for instructional integration across the curriculum-assist students with core instruction in every classroom/subject matter. NCA Conferences-to help me understand and then evaluate data for successful strategies/interventions for learning.</p>
<p>The data and different strategies presented during professional development provide educators with information and a variety of methods to instruct all students.</p>	<p>Interesting new ideas and strategies allow teachers the chance to improve their classroom skills, in turn relaying success to students.</p>
<p>I feel staff development has helped us be a team. We know more about what is going on in each other's room. This has helped us build our curriculum in a sequence.</p>	<p>I have been quite active with QPA. If I had not I would not been able to incorporate my strategies in my computer classes as easily. Without the experiences I have had, it would be more difficult to understand and incorporate in computer classes.</p>
<p>Curriculum is now focused on state standards and not (so much) on textbooks.</p>	<p>I have attended several reading improvement workshops and in-services. I read the latest news on school improvement, and implement new strategies in the classroom. While all this pressure is applied to the public schools for school improvement and teacher accountability, why do home schooled people and students escape accountability? They have no testing at all. Lets make Kansas students accountable and that includes home-schooled students.</p>
<p>The professional development sessions I selected for myself were based on my needs in my curriculum area. Other sessions were those assigned by my building principal and related to school improvement issues. I am a believer that I can always find helpful information in any session I attend. I gear my professional development choices toward strategies for my classroom needs; through years of teaching experience I have learned to be selective and focused.</p>	<p>Professional development has helped foster more beneficial and innovative ideas with increased emphasis on cooperative learning, students are finding it to be greatly rewarding when they assist each other and work together.</p>

Challenge School	Comparison School
It has helped with the teaching of strategies so students could be more efficient learners. New and different ways of teaching to students.	It has vastly improved my focus while I am teaching. I now know what should be stressed as I'm preparing for my lesson plans.
Because of staff development, I have integrated reading strategies that help students to read closer and with more attention to text than before.	It provides a definite focus for all instruction-I think Kansas should print their own texts based on QPA and No Child Left Behind tests. Profits from the sale of the books would go to education.
Professional development has provided me the opportunity to learn about other teaching strategies.	I have used ideas from workshops that I've attended in my classroom.
ESL training has provided strategies to work with students.	I feel professional development has helped me keep current on educational issues and new teaching methods.
The most helpful was how to read data, determine needs and strategies and plan appropriate interventions to raise scores. The most difficult was trying to figure out which intervention would have the most impact and how to avoid adding "more to do." We still need to work "smarter" not harder (doing that already!)	Professional development activities often offer alternative perspectives of or strategies for learning. This is helpful since it helps me to see beyond my own learning modalities and has given me fresh ideas to try in the classroom.
The professional development I have participated in for Reading in our school has focused and strengthened my instruction using the SFA program.	It's given me the confidence to use technological advances.
The best professional development for me has been chairing a committee on teacher evaluation and the research and collaborative work involved in that committee. Attendance at NSTA conferences has impacted my classroom both in science and other content areas.	The Kagan training has helped motivate student learning.
Most professional development makes me reevaluate what I do in my classroom to see if I am using best practices. I have been concerned with reading comprehension with students at our level and some workshops have addressed this issue well.	I have used professional time to observe and subsequently implement guided reading in my classroom. I have documented the progress my students have made. It's been awesome! Our school is considering the Guided Reading approach K-6.
The professional development I have received during my teaching career has strengthened my strategies for all learning styles. I offer more approaches to a concept because of brain research training—multiple intelligences, dimensions of learning, and Quantum learning.	The professional development I have participated in has basically reinforced what I have already been doing in my classroom. The professional development that I found most useful was geared toward classroom management I have learned without strategies to maintain a controlled classroom not much learning will take place.
Science demonstrations relating to scientific process has made me more comfortable doing experiments using the scientific method and vocabulary.	It has made me aware of the many ways students learn and that these differences all need to be addressed by me.
A science class that I took has increased my students' enthusiasm in that subject. I often hear how "science is my favorite class" and I now feel much more confident about teaching science.	Recently, I have attended reading workshops that have changed my approach to teaching for the positive. I am also excited about some real possibilities technology can have in the classroom and hope to learn even more through in-service opportunities.
I have used and still used the Kagan Coop. Learning effectively in my classroom. I am continually using my curriculum map.	I have developed into a better teacher by implementing different strategies that I have learned.

Challenge School	Comparison School
<p>Our district offers a variety of staff development activities, after school and in the summer, as supplements to district and building in-service activities. This offers staff wonderful opportunities to learn and in turn, improve skills and strategies for improving student learning</p>	<p>My professional development has increased my knowledge in student-differences in learning.</p>
<p>I have applied almost everything I have learned this year in my professional development in my classroom. The students benefit from my being exposed to different teaching strategies. After being involved in Reading staff development, I have learned how to better question my students and let them think at a higher level. This has probably had the largest impact in my classroom, because it has been applied in all subject areas.</p>	<p>Professional development has helped me learn strategies to help my students, those that achieve and those that don't.</p>
<p>I am fortunate to teach in a very progressive and supportive school district that truly believes every child can achieve. With a district our size it's difficult for every professional development activity to be tailored to every grade level, building, or teacher. However, I have always felt that if I come away with one strategy or piece of information that will help my students grow academically or socially then my time has been well spent. To date, I have been able to walk away from each in-service with something I can use in my classroom.</p>	<p>It has given me the opportunity to increase my knowledge of how to better help my students increase their skill levels, made me a better teacher and has made my students more successful.</p>
<p>A few workshops on "data analysis" helped me to make better use of state assessment data, thus being able to better plan curriculum material to be covered in class. I'm concerned that professional development is becoming too stringent. Too much paperwork required for staff development! Teachers limited to workshops only applying to school's current staff development program. Many good teachers will be lost due to fact that teaching is not fun anymore!</p>	<p>I have become more aware of the multiple needs operating within the students that I serve. Many days I feel helpless in meeting all of these needs. I try my best. I trust that I say the right word at the right time in the right way.</p>
<p>Some of the workshops have shown me some of the new ideas and materials that are available.</p>	<p>Reading improvement workshops are changing my approach to literature studies.</p>
<p>Data driven decision-making involving instruction has been most effective. By doing systematic item-by-item analysis of test data in all subject areas, I can focus on the skills my students need, rather than wasting time on items they have already mastered.</p>	<p>Last year I went to a really good one on T1-83 calculators I have used them a lot in my classroom since then.</p>
<p>The professional development that I've received in reading and writing (Reading Renaissance/6 Traits of Reading/6 Traits of Writing) have strengthened my instructional skills as well as they've added to my arsenal of instructional strategies. As a result, my reading/writing 1st students benefit as well as my Comp I students. Now I'm more able to reach/diagnose and plan skill practices for multiple levels of students' ability.</p>	<p>Due to curriculum development workshops based on state standards, I have changed some of my areas of emphasis in the classroom.</p>

Challenge School	Comparison School
I feel like the professional development in my school district is top notch. It has taught me so about how to use data.	While our professional development has focused on curriculum alignment it has been very beneficial for the students and the teachers.
I have learned to break the block period into 3 separate sections that each have different modes of learning. Professional development as it relates to curriculum alignment with state standards and vertically throughout the district has streamlined teaching content with less repetition. Training in technology, cooperative learning, traits of writing and reading and problem solving have given me strategies to make learning more effective, interesting, and varied according to student needs.	Problem solving and six traits of reading have made a difference in the classroom.
Increased awareness of teaching strategies and reinforced confidence in what I am already doing.	Focusing PD on student needs, data reviews, and state standards has put real meaning to in-services and workshops that one would attend. Being held accountable for the information when returning to the classroom is also a benefit.
Professional development focused on reading and math has increased my knowledge of strategy instruction. Use of these strategies by students has resulted in increased work recognition, word decoding, reading comprehension and problem solving	Focus on state expectations.
I have adapted many of the ideas I have received in the various meetings, workshops and conference that I have attended in the last two years. I have used ideas from the brain-based learning, six-trait reading and the QPA strategies among others. Specifically I have changed the way I teach vocabulary and have added to the strategies I use to improve student's reading skills. I have also adapted specific lesson plans for some the works I teach and have used specific ideas for writing prompts	
Motivated and inspired me which in turn benefits my students	
Professional development enhances teaching, which then increases student learning. Without it, the quality of teaching overall would go down	
Because of the analysis of student test data, I was able to focus instruction to what was needed by my students. This allowed students to also focus on areas of need.	
I have applied almost everything I have learned this year in my professional development in my classroom. The students benefit from my being exposed to different teaching strategies. After being involved in Reading staff development, I have learned how to better question my students and let them think at a higher level. This has probably had the largest impact in my classroom, because it has been applied in all subject areas.	
The kind of PD I am talking about is the workshops that have "hands on" stuff; not just a lecture.	

Challenge School	Comparison School
The staff development I received in regard to the Direct Instruction Reading Program was very helpful. It demonstrated how to teach the program. The students have been very successful.	
Professional development with Cooperative learning has helped me to facilitate students helping each other, leaving less time for students to wait on me to answer questions. Workshops on teaching methods and behavior management have helped me organize lessons and units, as well as create a more positive learning environment	
My school has encouraged me to attend meetings, workshops and conferences. Administration also allowed me the freedom for on-the-job practice and experimentation. This has allowed me to pick the strategies that I feel work the best and use them in my class.	

3. Professional development allows teachers to stay current on latest research and strategies and gives them information for development of new strategies and/or instructional change in the future.

Challenge School	Comparison School
Professional development has allowed me to stay current on researched strategies that increase learning. Also, it has allowed me to stay updated on new and effective ways to integrate technology into my classroom.	The Professional development helps make me more aware of new innovations in education and helps keep me in “the loop” as it is easy to become isolated in the classroom.
For me, the key aspect of professional development is planting a seed for future strategies I can use in my classroom. A workshop may spark an idea that leads to a better way to do something in my classroom.	
It has offered several different reading and writing strategies; my concern is that these are being implemented with little thought given to reliable unbiased research.	
It has encouraged me to integrate more best practices into my lessons. I enjoy learning about research findings and how they affect students in my classes. P.D. also provides a common basis for discussion with my peers, so I sense that students are positively affected.	
My district is very focused and directed by current research and practices. It is a driving force behind our professional development. There is always follow-up and support.	

4. It is important for teachers to have time to collaborate/mentor/observe other teachers.

Challenge School	Comparison School
By providing opportunities to exchange information with teams and teachers at same grade level, I have gotten other instructional ideas to use with my students. Those times of “sharing” are invaluable to me!	Professional development has broadened my knowledge base from which I pull ideas and strategies for teaching and reteaching information. I have found collaboration with colleagues especially helpful in helping struggling students because it allows us to discuss what is or is not working in other areas.
Professional development has very directly impacted student learning in my classroom. By collaborating with peers and brainstorming or learning about new methods of teaching I am better equipped to help them achieve mastery of my subject.	The two overviews were extremely helpful as reminders of different types of graphic organizers and of the six traits of writing. We have also included teachers outside of the language arts to help score writing assessments. This practice was an excellent reinforcer for the six trait writing-obvious confidence. Note: So many times we have teachers who are “experts” of varying degrees and can enlighten other teachers on staff. An excellent facilitator for all of this has been collaborative time and department meetings...teachers provided time to plan and interact on given topics.
The time spent collaborating with my department has made me more prepared as I enter the classroom, therefore allowing my students a better chance to succeed.	Opportunity to borrow veteran teacher’s experience, combined with administration’s focus to develop goals and strategies
	It is a great way to learn more techniques that have helped others.
	Our staff is working together for the betterment of our students and community.
	As a staff we are able to put our ideas together and brainstorm teaching strategies. It has strengthened communication with students.
	The professional development I have received has provided me with the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers from separate schools. This has enabled me to discover a variety of strategies that have increased student learning in my classroom.
	The most beneficial professional development I have had has come from other math teachers outside of our school.
	Student Improvement Team-keep records and we work after school every week to help teachers/parents/ students. Conference and state people come in to help us.
	Professional development has allowed for increased collaboration of teachers to successfully implement, report, record, share and improve best practices of researched based teaching strategies.

5. There has been an increase in student scores/learning/achievement as a direct result of professional development.

Challenge School	Comparison School
Using research-based strategies has increased student learning in my classrooms. The reading strategies provided by our district have been invaluable.	Certainly, the creative ideas and postings of their success has increased student learning.
Our school is constantly monitoring strengths and weaknesses at our school, which has helped us as a staff meet their needs. An example would be the weakness that we saw in math problem solving skills. We adopted strategies to use throughout all grades, and saw great improvement in this area after we worked as a staff, to have all teachers knowledgeable to these problem solving materials and strategies.	It has increased student success due to knowledge and skills gained through professional development. I believe our district is very focused on staff improvement and what is best for our children.
The professional development I have received has impacted student learning because of the training I have received with problem-based instruction. Along with math committee meetings where we share ideas. My students are understanding concepts as opposed to empty memorizing procedures.	As Six Trait writing is taught at each grade level, students have become much better writers than they used to be and its easier to build on their knowledge. We're seeing the same results in other subject areas that consistently apply the same strategies at each grade level. The reinforcement from year to year with the same strategies has made a difference.
We have 3 learning teams we rotated through during the course of the school year. Reading, Writing, and "Constructivist" learning were the subjects focused on this year (determined through our school improvement plan.) We formed groups based on particular needs we had within the subject we were researching. I have made several changes to the writing instruction and have seen significant changes in the abilities of the 1 st grade students as writers.	Many of the workshops in our district are directly tied to our school improvement strategies. Our data indicates how much student learning has been affected.
I have received extensive training in the SFA reading program and have seen it positively impact students' reading achievement.	Reading scores are improving.
Our adoption of SFA and all the training we have received has shown tremendously increased student learning.	I have gone to some workshops this year that I believe have directly influenced student learning. I expect our reading scores to be higher than normal.
The professional development has contributed to increased student learning in my classroom because it has addressed learning styles, individual education plans goals and strategies to help each student succeed. It has helped keep our district abreast of state requirements and the needs of our student population.	
It has improved my curriculum and aligned it with the state standards; it has increased student achievement.	
Professional development has contributed to increased student learning through research and insight. Within our building we are constantly researching best practices for our students. We have high expectations for our students and to reach this goal we need to know how to address each academic area and student.	

Challenge School	Comparison School
<p>The continued improvement on state testing-the continued evidence of high ACTs and Merit finalists-the fact that in both the QPA level and the Integrated review level the state has not found this district wanting-the continued integration of K-12 in a bottom to top implementation of said practice.</p>	
<p>Professional development in the 4 Block Model has increased student learning in my classroom. The strategies applied in the Reading Recovery Program and 6-Trait Writing have also been taught through professional development.</p>	
<p>I believe that some of the professional development has improved my teaching, which increases student learning.</p>	
<p>The initial and continued professional development provided by Success for All has helped teachers in our school learn and implement research based teaching strategies. Our 5th graders have made a significant increase in scores on the Kansas Reading Assessment.</p>	
<p>There has been an attitude shift in that students are realizing the importance of an education or at least that the expectation is that all work is mandatory and help is always available. We have fewer F's and higher standardized test results.</p>	

6. Professional development is not that helpful or is not supported by the BOE/superintendent.

Challenge School	Comparison School
I don't want to trivialize professional and staff development. Students do well on state language tests because they read and write often. I know this sounds old fashioned but it works for us. Having small classes helps teachers get through the grading.	I hope all the new techniques and programs have increased student learning-I'm not sure at this point. The testing has not shown great improvement but we cover many more areas than 2-3 years ago.
I think the success of our school has less to do with "professional development" than with having motivated people who work together well	Most of my professional development over the past 3 years has been planned and taken by me-on my own initiative. I have used the info from these trainings to reinforce strategies I am already using. Being a member of our school QPA team has also given me many opportunities to lead and plan staff trainings, which will occur next year.
This past year it has not made a difference	The professional development I have pursued has been very beneficial. My district's professional development has not been very beneficial; it's been more busy work. We have a new superintendent now, so we'll see if our staff development will change for the positive.
I can't say it has. Many of our PD in-services focus on technology. We spend 20-30 minutes at one station before being shuffled off to the next—no sustained learning time.	The professional development that has done me the most good are the conferences I've attended on my own-district in-services, especially recently (last few years) strike me as thrown together at the last minute and poorly planned-especially this year.
You can call it by a hundred names. In-service is expensive, bureaucratic to the max and 99% a big fat waste of time.	Our school board and superintendent have not been very supportive of any of this. Our principals have done their best to improve professional development.
Integration of computer technology has transformed my classroom. I must say that my own research and reading has had a greater impact than district planned training since I am addressing my own professional development needs.	The only benefits that I have received from professional development have been through college grad classes which I had to pay for.
	The upper grade teachers have gone to a lot of PD sessions to help improve teaching techniques so our test scores would be higher. When we asked to go to some conferences we were told there was no money in the budget.
	The district does not allow this school to have team time for teachers to meet. We are an alternative school, but are expected to act like the regular schools; however, we are not given the same resources. If given the same opportunities as other schools, student learning would increase dramatically.

Challenge Schools	Comparison Schools
	<p>Honestly, some of the professional development has been QPA based, and much of that has been repetitive. I believe QPA basically has good ideas and yes, I have used the assessments that are appropriate to my area of teaching. However, I believe other kinds of professional development are needed. QPA has almost literally, been shoved down our throats (by the legislature) which does not lead to productive teaching on the instructors part and productive learning on the students part. I truly wish someone would research the amount of money our state has spent on QPA. It would be mind-boggling. Professional development should be ongoing and enriching. An idea, which may not be considered professional development, would be inviting someone from the Board Of Education or the legislature on a periodic basis to visit schools of all sizes. This is probably not what I was supposed to write. Other kinds of professional development workshops would be teacher shadowing teachers from other schools, trading ideas and working together for the betterment of our students.</p>
	<p>I feel the so-called professional development that's done at my school has made no difference and has made no contribution to increasing student learning in my classroom-my administrators care about stats not students.</p>
	<p>The professional development I have received outside of my district has been invaluable in strengthening my knowledge and building my skills and strategies I use with my students. On the other hand what I receive in my district is mostly a waste of my time. It is difficult for the needs of each teacher to be met by a district. I believe that it is important for the State Department, Service Centers and Universities to offer many opportunities for teachers to attend professional development workshops.</p>

MISC COMMENTS—

Challenge Schools	Comparison Schools
<p>My district has more professional development than any other place I have taught. I have taught in 4 other states and my district is truly committed to Prof. Development.</p>	
<p>I think it all helps.</p>	