

**Education Minnesota's TALL Project:  
Teachers as Learners and Leaders**

**Second Annual Evaluation Report**

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## Executive Summary

### Background

Teachers As Learners & Leaders (TALL) was born from two ideas. First was the realization by the Minnesota Legislature that, in order for all students to benefit from Minnesota's Graduation Standards, educators would need to learn a variety of new instructional strategies. For this learning to take place, educators need access to strong and effective professional development programs. The Minnesota Legislature passed legislation in the 1990's to support quality professional development. Second was the understanding by Education Minnesota that teachers need to take responsibility for their professional development. Using money appropriated by the Minnesota Legislature through the Department of Children, Families, and Learning, Education Minnesota created TALL as a way to help teachers strengthen the quality of professional development in schools.

During the first year of TALL (2000-01), approximately 600 Professional Development Activists (PDAs) representing 250 school districts<sup>1</sup> systematically analyzed the condition of professional development in their school districts (Phase I) and wrote action plans to address weak areas (Phase II). Most action plans focused on the compliance with professional development statutes and state requirements. Many districts needed to work on issues such as the structure of their Staff Development Committees and the use of money that was to be set aside for professional development.

In the second year (2001-02), with the support of Education Minnesota, the PDAs began the work of improving the quality of their professional development programs. During Phases III, IV, and V, TALL trainers offered sessions that focused on the themes of leadership, change, and the use of data. TALL trainers introduced the PDAs to the *Action Research Project*, a tool designed to get their district colleagues more actively involved in the improvement of professional development. After each TALL session the PDAs reflected on their training experience.

### Results

The evaluation in year two focused on the progress of TALL participants in Phases III-V, the content and congruence of the TALL documents completed by PDAs, and changes in TALL participation.

#### *Progress at the End of Phases III, IV, and V*

An analysis of the narrative responses of PDAs revealed the following themes:

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<sup>1</sup> Education Minnesota's point of contact was the local teacher union that selected the PDAs.

- Phase III
  - PDAs understand that leadership can be shared, and that all teachers are potential leaders;
  - Some PDAs see themselves as the “Positive Deviants”<sup>2</sup> that organizations need to initiate and support change;
  - PDAs expressed two main concerns: (1) the possibility of Education Minnesota being unable to continue with TALL, and (2) finding time to engage their colleagues in reflection and dialogue;
  
- Phase IV
  - PDAs see the need for carefully interpreted, appropriate data to support change;
  - PDAs’ current “mental model” of quality professional development centers on people collaborating to accomplish something; participants at this point do not commonly refer to elements of quality professional developments defined by the National Staff Development Council’s Standards for Staff Development;
  - PDAs say they need to find more ways to share with their colleagues what they are learning as part of TALL;
  
- Phase V
  - PDAs say their top allies in supporting stronger professional development are the District Professional Development Committee and the principals;
  - PDAs say they would like more support from principals and fellow teachers;
  - Most PDAs say their *Action Plan* has changed somewhat since it was first written, usually by tightening general goals or broadening specific ones;
  - PDAs identify two changes they would like to see in their school district, (1) more colleagues sharing responsibility for improving professional development and (2) more support from district administration and school boards.

### ***Content and Congruence of TALL Documents***

- 75 percent of the *Action Plan* targets were items where PDAs reported a problem in professional development that needed immediate attention. The other targets addressed areas that were at least adequate, and the PDAs wanted to make improvements;
- 38 percent of the targets in the *Action Plans* focused on the structures supporting professional development: the district staff development plan and the district and site staff development committees;
- 33 percent of the targets were related to the quality of professional development in the school district (e.g., Student needs serve as the basis for teacher learning.);
- 75 percent of the *Action Research Projects* were directly or indirectly related to an issue in the *Action Plan*;

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<sup>2</sup> “Positive Deviant”, David Dorsey; *Fast Company*, December 2000.

- 33 percent of the *Action Research Projects* addressed the quality of professional development; 31 percent addressed issues of compliance with applicable state statutes; 15 percent addressed professional development in general; the rest covered a number of topics (e.g., student achievement, union involvement with professional development, and curriculum).

### ***Changes in TALL Participation***

- In the first year there were 505 participants in TALL, most of them PDAs representing 248 locals; in the second year there were 413 PDAs representing 219 locals;
- PDAs from 19 school districts, mostly small and rural, joined TALL in 2002;
- PDAs from 48 school districts left TALL in 2002;
- PDAs from school districts new to TALL were more likely to report problems; with teacher retention and implementing Graduation Standards than PDAs that joined TALL in the first year.

### **Summary and Implications**

TALL staff and trainers worked with the PDAs for six months in 2001-02. Key results derived from an analysis of about 250 *Local Staff Development Assessments (Local Assessments)*, *Action Plans*, and *Action Research Projects*, and PDA reflections from each of the training sessions and their implications include:

#### **1. Participation in TALL is dynamic and should be expected to change each year.**

Approximately 50 of the 248 school districts that were part of year one did not participate in year two. PDAs from about 20 small, rural school districts joined TALL in year two.

PDAs that joined TALL in year one, compared to those that started in year two, were more likely to focus their *Action Plans* on problems they identified in the *Local Assessment*. PDAs from year one were also more likely to focus on quality problems, *when they existed*, than on problems of compliance and capacity.

***Implications:*** Education Minnesota faces the challenge of supporting a process of change across Minnesota school districts that is not constant. That is, the number of PDAs, and the number and characteristics of school districts should be expected to fluctuate. Each year, as the TALL design team did this past year, training and support will need to be customized in order to address the new or returning PDAs and the developmental progress of the school district's professional development system.

#### **2. The *Local Assessments*, *Action Plans*, and *Action Research Projects* were usually congruent. Most *Action Research Projects* focus on compliance or quality issues.**

About a third (31 percent) of the PDAs specified an *Action Research Project* that focused on some aspect of compliance. Another third (33 percent) focused on the quality of professional development.

Many of the *Action Research Projects* include a survey of staff in order to be sure the PDAs are addressing their needs. Taken together with the comments of participants after Phases III-V, it is clear that the PDAs understand that, to succeed, they must create a shared vision of quality professional development with their colleagues..

**Implications:** The PDAs looking to improve the *quality* of their professional development programs do not have the weight of a legislative mandate behind them. Consequently, efforts focused on quality (as compared to compliance with statute) may require the PDA to make a good case for it with colleagues. PDAs may need to first foster discussions among their colleagues much like they experienced in TALL sessions in order to both build a coalition and to create a common vision or mental model of what constitutes quality professional development.

Some PDAs report working in school districts facing severe budgetary constraints; advocating for changes in professional development practices may be adversely affected by limited time and resources.

**3. TALL has trained a cadre of PDAs—local change agents—committed to improving the quality of professional development in the schools. However, many of these PDAs see themselves facing a challenging task as they return to their school districts.**

In order to help teachers see themselves as people who can have influence beyond their classroom, TALL emphasized that all teachers can lead. The participants in TALL understood this message. They also heard that their colleagues need to share their understanding of the ideas that they are bringing back to their schools. Obtaining this buy-in gives direction to their future activities and is also a source of their anxiety.

The *Action Plan* and *Action Research Project* were designed to help PDAs apply what they were learning in Phases III-V to the improvement of professional development in their schools. Almost two-thirds of the PDAs finishing Phase V expressed a concern about implementing some aspect of the TALL initiative in their school district which suggests the transition from theory to practice may be challenging, especially in those cases where only one PDA represented the local.

**Implications:** The comments in the reflections of participants in Phases III, IV, and V suggest that PDAs would like more time, continued direction, and support for working on professional development issues with others in their school districts. This is a welcome challenge for Education Minnesota as it demonstrates that a large cohort of PDAs across the state is willing to continue working on strengthening professional development in their school districts. An appropriate next step for Education Minnesota may be serving in a facilitative role with smaller

groups of district and local representatives—supporting them as they grapple with specific issues. They need continued support.

## Introduction and Background

High quality professional development programs are essential to creating schools in which all students and staff continually improve their performances. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, several major research studies and reviews contributed to a common understanding of the characteristics of effective staff development that lead to changes in teaching and learning.<sup>3</sup>

In order to make sure that school districts address the continuing professional education of teachers, Minnesota statutes require the creation of staff development committees at the district and site level and the allocation of two percent of the district's budget to support the work of these committees. The legislation further stipulates that half of the allocation be distributed to the sites, a quarter of it be used for grants to sites for best practice methods, and a quarter be used for district-wide staff development.

Traditionally, many teachers and teacher groups, including teacher unions, have not played a major role in the implementation of staff development in Minnesota school districts. Often teachers are regarded as recipients of training that others, like district administrators, have planned for them. Teachers tend to experience in-service sessions as a collection of individual events that do not lead to the development of professional skills.

Education Minnesota launched Teachers as Learners and Leaders (TALL) in 2000 to get teachers more involved in their professional development, and to give them the tools and information they need to do it well.

In the first year of TALL (early 2001) each local teacher union in Minnesota was invited to identify two representatives from its ranks to be Professional Development Activists (PDAs). Approximately 500 PDAs (representing over 250 school districts and educational cooperatives) completed, with the help of district personnel, a comprehensive self assessment (the TALL Project *Local Staff Development Assessment*, called the *Local Assessment* in this report). This document painted a picture of the extent to which the school district complies with the state laws related to professional development (PD), the quality of PD in their school districts, and the local union's support of PD.<sup>4</sup> Participating PDAs used the results of the *Local Assessment* to generate an *Action Plan* that addressed areas needing attention.<sup>5</sup>

In its second year (2001-02), the work of the PDAs focused on implementing the *Action Plans* developed in 2001 and creating an *Action Research Project* that will be implemented during the 2002-03 school year. Based on the belief that action research is a good way to develop the professional skills of teachers, the PDAs articulated a key question related to their particular *Action Plan*. From these questions, the PDAs designed *Action Research Projects* that would

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<sup>3</sup> Sparks, D. & Loucks-Horsley, S. (1989). Five models of staff development. *Journal of Staff Development*, 10(4) pp. 1-25.

<sup>4</sup> The phrases Professional Development and Staff Development are used interchangeably in this report.

<sup>5</sup> For more information about the first year activities and accomplishments of TALL see the evaluation report prepared by the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota (<http://carei.coled.umn.edu>).

generate the information or data necessary to answer the question. The idea was to get the PDAs to apply what they had learned about professional development to a serious matter of local interest.

To support this work, TALL trainers and staff hosted four days of new events for PDAs in order to build their knowledge and skills as change agents. These sessions focused on offering participants further knowledge and skills in three areas:

- Leadership;
- Change;
- Use of data.

Phases III and IV, offered on a regional basis across the state, involved a Friday night and Saturday. Phase V involved a final Saturday event at 20 sites across the state where the TALL Support Team (specially trained retired teachers) served as the facilitators.

Recognizing the challenges inherent in this work, Education Minnesota created an Intervention Team during the first year of TALL in order to help school districts and/or local unions resolve unique and challenging situations. Membership on this team includes staff from Education Minnesota and representatives from the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning and the Minnesota School Boards Association. A more detailed summary of the work of the Intervention Team appears in Appendix A.

Additionally, Education Minnesota repeated Phase I and II training this past year for approximately 20 additional local unions and a few replacement PDAs from local unions continuing their second year. These sessions focused on the topics introduced during year one of TALL: compliance with Minnesota legislation related to professional development, the attributes of quality Professional Development, and building capacity.

The evaluation of TALL during its second year focused on:

- Progress of TALL participants at the end of Phase III, Phase IV, and Phase V sessions;
- An analysis of the focus and congruence of TALL *Local Assessment* results, *Action Plans*, and *Action Research Projects*;
- The characteristics of the locals that joined TALL the second year.

## Evaluation Method

Key questions that guided the evaluation during 2001-02 include:

### *Progress*

1. What knowledge do TALL participants gain as a result of participating in each phase?
2. What lingering concerns do TALL participants report at each phase?
3. What actions do TALL participants target at each phase, and what actions do they take?
4. Do the TALL participants see their mental models of quality professional development changing from the beginning of Phase III to the end of Phase V?
5. What are the perceived “breakthrough” accomplishments of TALL districts as it relates to leadership development, initiating and sustaining a change process, and using data to support change? (See Appendix E)

### *Focus and Congruence of TALL Documents*

6. What compliance, quality and capacity issues related to professional development are PDAs focusing on?
7. How congruent are *Local Assessments*, *Action Plans*, and *Action Research Projects*?
8. How does the focus and congruence vary by school district size and location?

### *Characteristics of Participating School Districts*

9. At what developmental stage is each *Action Plan*?
10. Do the *Action Plans* address weak areas in compliance, quality and capacity?

Sources of data to address the above questions include the documents prepared by the PDAs during 2000-01 and/or 2001-02 (the TALL Project *Local Assessment*, *Action Plan*, and *Action Research Project*); small group reflection exercises completed by each PDA team at the end of Phases III, IV, and V sessions; and an informal survey that Education Minnesota administered to PDAs who started in Year 1 but did not continue in Year 2.

While the documents prepared by the PDAs represent a rich source of data, they do present some challenges in terms of analysis. PDAs completed these documents as part of the TALL process but did not always respond to every question. As a result, analyses are often limited to making comparisons within a question or topic. For example, in response to the question, *Who else is working to improve professional development in your district?*, 46 percent of the PDAs at the end of Phase V cited the principal and 21 percent cited the superintendent. These numbers tell us that PDAs are more likely to see the principal rather than the superintendent working to improve professional development in their school district. However, we cannot say that almost 50 percent of the principals in the participating districts are working to improve professional development.

## Results

### Progress at the End of Phases III, IV, and V Sessions

The PDAs reported facing a formidable task in helping the school district strengthen their professional development program. School districts are often large organizations that have been doing things a certain way for a long period of time. Because of the organizational structures of schools, change may not be welcome, even when its promise is positive. The narrative reflections prepared by the PDAs this past year (refer to Appendix B for examples) allow us to track their progress as change agents, including how they were defining and dealing with the challenges that were ahead of them (refer to Appendices C-E for summaries of the responses of participants who attended Phases III, IV, and V).

#### *Phase III*

The Phase III session focused on the concepts of Leadership, Change, and Using Data. The TALL trainers introduced knowledge designed to increase PDA capacity for facilitating the improvement of professional development in their school districts.

The primary message the PDAs identified on (lasting) change was that it cannot be forced; change needs to come from within, which means that “buy-in” from those involved is critical. PDAs commented that, even then, change efforts may often be accompanied by discomfort, uncertainty, and conflict among those individuals involved in the process. Additionally a few of the PDAs delighted in seeing themselves as the “Positive Deviants” needed in organizations to initiate and support change.<sup>6</sup>

PDAs also commonly reported taking away the following key message about leadership:

*Leadership is best thought of as a group process where responsibility is shared and teamwork is plentiful. Part of this vision of leadership is seeing each teacher as a potential leader.*

The reflections of PDAs concerning the use of data were cautious. That is, they commented that data can be flawed, incomplete, unreliable or the wrong data for the purpose. Furthermore, they said that interpretation of data can be challenging. Nevertheless, PDAs at the end of Phase III saw data as useful for supporting action.

Common “next steps” reported by PDAs at the end of Phase III included:

- Developing or reevaluating their *Action Plan*;
- Creating or refocusing their District Staff Development Committee;
- Getting the TALL “story” out to their colleagues.

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<sup>6</sup> “Positive Deviant”, David Dorsey; *Fast Company*, December 2000.

The PDA's primary concern at this point in their training centered on the question of whether or not the State of Minnesota would drop its support of TALL (Appendix C-1). They also expressed concerns about getting their colleagues involved in efforts to strengthen professional development in the district.

#### *Phase IV*

The Phase IV session focused on four topics: Types of Data, Interpretation of Data, Action Research, and preparation for the *Action Research Project*. PDAs also learned strategies for the creative uses of time and schedules (teachers often identify school schedules limiting possibilities for collaboration), incorporating professional development into their professional practice, and working with colleagues.

At the end of Phase IV, PDAs were asked to describe their "mental model" of quality professional development. The most common view was that quality professional development involved people collaborating to solve a problem or accomplish a task. Although a general view, it contains two key concepts that we know from the research on effective professional development:

- People in the school or district work together rather than in isolation;
- The focus is on a common problem or task rather than an individual one.

Other comments regarding quality professional development centered on its desired effects (i.e., furthers student achievement) or elements of the professional development planning process (i.e., using data to guide activities).

The PDAs offered differing interpretations of the role of the *Action Research Project* (Appendix D-4). For example, some PDAs saw the *Action Research Project* as a means to accomplish TALL's stated goal of improving professional development. Other PDAs saw it as a vehicle for focusing more narrowly on collecting and studying data about a question or issue in the school district.

Common "next steps" reported by PDAs at the end of Phase IV included:

- Finding ways to share with their colleagues what they learned in their TALL training (cited by a third of the respondents);
- Making further changes in their professional development committees or *Action Plans*.

When asked what could derail their efforts back in their schools, the number one concern expressed by PDAs centered on resistance or opposition from others, including a concern that the administration would not support them. Selected PDAs also mentioned concerns related to a lack of time and money.

## *Phase V*

The focus of Phase V was Using Data, Framing Questions, and Planning an *Action Research Project*. While the PDAs spent most of this day preparing to develop their project, they also reviewed some professional development resources.

At the end of the Phase V session, PDAs reflected on what they felt needed to happen in their districts for professional development to make a tangible difference in teaching and learning. Almost half (46 percent) of the PDAs said it would require fellow educators to have an understanding of the value of professional development and be actively involved in it. PDAs (approximately 21 percent) also indicated that professional development will make a difference when educators feel a shared responsibility for outcomes. A smaller proportion (approximately 17 percent) cited the need for the administrator or the school board to do their part.

PDAs then reflected on the degree of engagement of other players in the district in working to strengthen professional development (see Appendix E-1). A number of PDAs indicated they represent the most active player in their district at this point—highlighting the gap between what they think it will take for professional development to make a difference and what the current situation is in their district. The other active groups and players cited by PDAs at this point include:

- Members of the district professional development committee (48 percent);
- School principals (36 percent);
- School superintendent (30 percent);
- Teachers (29 percent).

Players that PDAs indicated as clearly missing at this stage include:

- Administrators (30 percent);
- Teachers (28 percent).

When asked how they will get these missing people involved, the most common approach centered on the sharing of TALL information and materials to build awareness (48 percent). Less frequently, PDAs mentioned getting colleagues involved on committees or asking for input via surveys or focus groups.

PDAs reported mixed progress on completing work outlined in their *Action Plans* at this point. About a third (35 percent) of the PDAs indicated their *Action Plan* has changed, usually because goals were reworked to be either more focused or more general. Another quarter (26 percent) of the PDAs indicated that the work on their *Action Plan* had not changed.

At the end of Phase V, PDAs generally were very actively pursuing the development and implementation of an *Action Research Project*. Approximately 17 percent of the PDAs indicate they are already implementing their project while 69 percent of them reported they

anticipate being ready to implement it by the end of the 2001-02 school year or the beginning of the 2002-03 school year. A small proportion (14 percent) of the PDAs, however, indicated that they did not know when they'll be ready to implement a project.

Lingering concerns about the *Action Research Project* most commonly centered on getting the necessary staff “buy in” (37 percent). Other concerns, expressed less frequently, centered on finding enough time to carry out the project, creating the necessary committees, finding funding, and locating accurate data.

In spite of these concerns, the PDAs remained quite optimistic at this point that TALL will have a noticeable effect on professional development, especially in the school in which they work: 26 percent were *Very Optimistic*, 53 percent were *Optimistic*, 19 percent were *Somewhat Optimistic*, with only 2 percent indicating they were *Not Very Optimistic*.

### ***Team Composition across Phases III, IV, and V***

Education Minnesota invited all local teacher unions<sup>7</sup> to send two PDAs to the TALL sessions. The majority (71 percent) of PDA teams had two PDAs, 22 percent had one PDA, and the rest had three or more. Almost all of the PDA teams included a classroom teacher. About 20 percent of the teams included a staff development coordinator and about five percent of the teams included a principal. There were very few educational assistants, school board members, superintendents, or MEEP coordinators on the teams.

PDAs also indicated the people, by professional role, who did not attend the session but were actively involved in the TALL initiative within the district (refer to Table 1). Here we see that classroom teachers were on average the most active participants and their involvement decreased slightly and then increased through Year 2. Additionally, there was a slight increase in the involvement of staff development coordinators and principals. However, participants representing other roles have yet to “come on board.”

**Table 1. Proportion of PDAs Reporting Active Involvement of Additional District Players (within the school district) in TALL, 2001-02**

<b>Professional Role</b>	2001-02 Phase		
	<b>III</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>
Classroom Teacher	51%	43%	76%
Staff Development Coordinator	7%	12%	13%
Principal	6%	7%	13%
School Board	3%	4%	5%
Superintendent	2%	5%	4%
MEEP Coordinator	1%	0%	4%
Educational Assistant	1%	1%	0%
Other	9%	9%	11%

Source: Reflection form completed by PDAs at the end of Phases III, IV, & V.

<sup>7</sup> A few large districts could send one or two additional PDAs.

## Content and Congruence of TALL Documents

### *Local Assessments and Action Plans*

The evaluation of TALL's first year found that *Action Plans* tended to focus on selected issues that surfaced as part of the *Local Staff Development Assessment*. Most of the targets specified on the *Action Plans* related to improving the quality of professional development or complying with the state law on district and site staff development committees (refer to Table 2). The pattern of target areas addressed in the *Action Plans* is generally the same across the school districts, regardless of district size. The only exception is that *Action Plans* from larger school districts were more likely to include targets related to strengthening union support for professional development.

**Table 2. Action Plan Targets by Size of School District Involved with TALL**

Section of <i>Local Assessment</i>	Number of Students					% of all Targets	% of all Action Plans
	<500	500- 1,000	1,001- 2,000	2,001- 10,000	>10,001		
Quality	40%	36%	32%	28%	35%	33%	63%
Site Committee	15%	13%	19%	17%	11%	16%	48%
District Committee	15%	10%	13%	11%	6%	12%	37%
District Plan	9%	13%	13%	11%	11%	12%	37%
Union Support for PD	7%	6%	7%	13%	15%	9%	27%
Miscellaneous	2%	6%	3%	6%	4%	5%	4%
Revenue	4%	4%	4%	7%	7%	5%	5%
Graduation Standards	4%	8%	2%	1%	4%	4%	4%
Continuing Education	1%	2%	4%	4%	0%	3%	3%
District & Site Committee	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Report to State	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%
Teacher Retention >74%	0%	0%	0%	1%	4%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	--

Note: The total number of targets in the *Action Plans* was 926 and the total number of Action Plans was 266; the average number of targets per Action Plan was 3.5.

Source: Action Plans prepared by each PDA, 2000-01 & 2001-02.

In terms of congruence between the issues surfaced as part of the *Local Staff Development Assessment* and the contents of the *Action Plan*, approximately 75 percent of the targeted items in the plans dealt with identified problem areas. The other 25 percent dealt with areas where conditions were satisfactory, but specified target focused on making them better in the district. There were 17 items from the *Local Assessment* that were included in at least 10 *Action Plans*, accounting for 34 percent of the 926 targeted items in the *Action Plans* (refer to Table 3).

**Table 3. Items in *Local Assessment* Most Frequently Targeted in *Action Plans***

Section of <i>Local Assessment</i>	<i>Local Assessment</i> Item	# citations in <i>Action Plan</i>
District SD Committee	District has a SD committee	36
Quality of PD	Teacher-needs serve as basis for PD	28
Union	Leadership acts as if PD is union work	27
Quality of PD	Student assessments used to determine PD	26
Quality of PD	PD has follow-up time & support	24
Quality of PD	Teachers mentor other teachers	22
Site SD Committee	Each site has a PD plan	20
Continuing Education	Relationship between SD & CE committee	17
District SD Committee	District SD plan based on School Board goals	16
Quality of PD	Dialogue & reflection part of PD	13
Reserved SD Revenue	25% used for best practice grants	13
District SD Plan	SD committee communicates plan to sites	13
Quality of PD	Student-needs serve as basis for PD	13
District SD Plan	Evaluate site progress toward goals	12
Quality of PD	Impact of PD on teacher practice evaluated	11
Local Teachers Union	Contract language has PD	11
MN Graduation Standards	Time is scheduled to discuss student work	10

Source: *Local Staff Development Assessment—Action Plan* sets prepared by PDAs.

### ***Action Plans and Action Research Projects***

The intent of the *Action Research Project* is to help PDAs and their district colleagues to zero in on an important issue (usually from their *Action Plan*) and to offer them experience in doing the kind of action research that supports quality professional development. The project has four stages: issue identification, data collection to support action planning, analysis and interpretation of data, and taking action/determining what is next.<sup>8</sup>

Compliance-Quality-Capacity was a major organizing framework for the first evaluation of TALL. Evaluation of Tall during its first year (2000-01) showed that school districts that were in the early stages of developing their staff development program were often dealing with compliance issues. School districts that were further along were more likely to be dealing with quality issues and capacity. The headings in Appendix F. indicate which sections of the *Local Assessment* are associated with each issue.

The issues chosen by the locals for their *Action Research Projects* varied widely. Table 4 shows the nature of the issues, including some other than compliance, quality or capacity. A third of the PDAs chose to address a quality issue. Almost another third chose compliance issues such as the Site and District Staff Development Committees. Although only six percent

<sup>8</sup> PDAs sent the first two parts of their *Action Research Projects* to Education Minnesota in June 2002. Parts three and four will be submitted in November 2002. As of July 2002, 192 *Action Research Projects* (parts 1 & 2) had been submitted and form the basis for the analyses that follow.

chose a capacity issue, we may have too narrowly defined that term by including only the Union and Teacher Retention sections.

**Table 4. Issues to be Addressed in Action Research Projects (ARP)**

Issue Area	Proportion of ARPs
Quality Professional Development	33%
Compliance with State Statute	31%
General Professional Development	15%
Student Achievement	7%
Capacity	6%
Curriculum & Instruction	4%
Other	4%

Source: *Action Research Projects* submitted by PDAs (n = 192).

A direct relationship between the *Action Plan* and the issue addressed in the *Action Research Project* exists in about half of the ARPs. An additional 21 percent of the *Action Plans—Action Research Projects* were tangentially related (e.g., the Action Plan is geared to improving the district staff development plan; the *Action Research Project* addresses staff attitudes about the value of staff development). Only 19 percent of the document pairs showed little congruence and the remaining six percent did not include sufficient information to determine relatedness.

Consistent with our earlier finding that PDAs were concerned with the attitudes of their district colleagues, 68 percent of the projects will involve collection of information related to staff attitudes about professional development (refer to Table 5). Other major areas of data collection include student achievement data (26 percent) or the current level of staff knowledge about such topics as staff development law, staff development standards, and instructional practice.

**Table 5. Types of Data to be Collected as Part of Action Research Projects (ARP)**

Type of Data	Proportion of ARPs
Attitudes of staff	68
Achievement data, grades, etc.	26
Knowledge of staff	26
Information about the organization	16
Attitudes of administrators and principals	15
Attitudes of students	13
Attitudes of parents and community	11
Review of the professional literature	8
Review of staff development plans	7

Source: *Action Research Projects* submitted by PDAs (n = 192).

The methods that PDAs and their teams plan to use to collect these data overwhelmingly focus on written surveys (specified in 81 percent of the project plans). Other targeted methods include interviews (32 percent) and focus groups (21 percent).

The clarity of plans for how data will be used once collected varied across the project plans. While 60 percent of the plans included a focused and clearly stated strategy, about 40 percent of the plans included a more general response that suggests the PDAs were not sure where the analysis of data would lead or how the information would be used. This lack of clarity was especially evident in plans that did not focus data collection on student achievement. In other words, PDAs and their teams may have a better understanding of how to use student achievement data in planning than how to use other types of information.

## Changes in TALL Participation

The total number of locals participating in TALL declined slightly from Year 1 to Year 2. In TALL’s first year, 2000-01, PDAs from 248 districts and educational units were actively involved. During the summer of 2001, 19 new districts joined TALL and 48 districts left this initiative, leaving 219 districts and educational units in TALL’s second year, 2001-02 (refer to Appendix G). PDAs from districts and units that left TALL commonly cited personal reasons, ranging from no longer teaching to not being able to commit to participation on weekends. Only a few of the departing PDAs cited the content of the TALL training as being inappropriate for them or their district.

The PDAs who joined TALL the second year came from school districts enrolling smaller numbers of students (refer to Table 6). At the same time, the PDAs who left TALL represented a cross section of the Year 1 participating districts.

**Table 6. District Size by Year of Involvement, 2000-01 and 2001-02**

District Size (# of students)	Districts Involved Only in Yr. 1	Districts Involved Only in Yr. 2	Districts Involved in Yr. 1 & Yr. 2	N <sup>9</sup>
<500	17%	21%	17%	46
501-1,000	19%	42%	24%	64
1,001-2,000	27%	32%	28%	75
2,001-10,000	33%	5%	24%	65
>10,000	4%	0%	7%	15
N	48	19	198	265

Source: Education Minnesota and Department of Children, Families, and Learning.

As part of the first year evaluation of TALL, CAREI developed a rubric for characterizing a school district’s status in terms of compliance with applicable Minnesota staff development statutes (refer to Appendix H). Specifically, a school district was considered *Proficient* if (1)

<sup>9</sup> The total number of school districts varies by table for two reasons: (1) local union is not synonymous with school district; (2) there were a few PDA teams that did not complete the *Action Plan* document, so an assessment of their professional development based on the *Action Plan* was not possible.

the professional development committee structures were complete and met regularly, (2) staff development plans were aligned with school district goals, (3) committee activities were aligned with plan outcomes, and (4) allocations of funds for staff development conformed to statutory requirements. School districts whose compliance was incomplete (e.g., district and site committees existed, but were not aligned; staff development plan existed, but had little input from teachers; best practice grants were offered, but few criteria for accessing them) were considered *Developing*. School districts whose compliance was minimal or non-existent were considered *Emerging*. Analysis of the completed *Local Assessments* indicates that PDAs who joined TALL in Year 2 were less likely to come from school districts in which the staff development programs were rated Proficient than were PDAs who joined in Year 1, although the result was not statistically significant (refer to Table 7).

**Table 7: Compliance Status of District Staff Development Programs by Year of Involvement**

Compliance with MN SD Statute	Districts Involved Only in Yr. 1	Districts Involved Only in Yr. 2	Districts Involved in Yr. 1 & Yr. 2	n
Emerging	52%	65%	52%	135
Developing	36%	35%	39%	99
Proficient	11%	0%	9%	22
n	44	17	195	256

Source: TALL Project *Local Assessments* completed by PDAs.

In terms of problem areas identified on the *Local Assessments*, the school districts new to TALL in 2001-02 were not much different from those who have been involved both years (refer to Table 3). This analysis was based on a comparison of how PDAs rated 130 multiple choice items that were organized into nine sections (see Appendix F for the key items that were included in this analysis). If PDAs marked all the key items in a section *Yes, Usually, or Always*, the section was considered not to be a problem. If one or more of the items in a section were marked *No, Seldom, or Never*, the section was considered a problem. For example, in Table 8 we see that 90 percent of the districts new to TALL in 2001-02 showed a problem in the section, Support for Professional Development, while 93 percent that participated in TALL both years showed a problem in this section.

**Table 8. District Staff Development Problem Areas by Year of Involvement**

Section of <i>Local Assessment</i>	Districts Involved Only in Yr. 2 (n =19)	Districts Involved Yr. 1 & Yr. 2 (n=202)	Probability
District Support of Quality Prof. Dev. (PD)	90%	93%	NS
Local Teacher Union Support of PD	100%	91%	NS
Continuing Education/License Renewal	88%	74%	NS
District Staff Development (SD) Plan	79%	66%	NS
Teacher Retention over 4 years is 75% or Better	95%	60%	*
District SD Committee	63%	56%	NS
Quality of PD	53%	55%	NS
Reserved SD Revenue	68%	53%	NS
Site SD Committee	57%	46%	NS
Report to the State	47%	39%	NS
MN Graduation Standards	68%	39%	*

Note: A chi-square test was used to determine the probability that the percentages in the two groups were significantly different. NS indicates non-significance; \* indicates a probability of  $p < .05$ .  
Source: TALL Project *Local Assessments* completed by PDAs.

Districts new to TALL, compared to those participating both years, differed significantly in two areas: Teacher Retention (where 95 percent of the new districts showed a problem versus 60 percent of the district participating both years) and Graduation Standards (where 68 percent of the new districts showed a problem compared to 39 percent of the districts participating both years).

While some PDAs may have reported problems in a number of sections of the *Local Assessment*, the TALL *Action Plan* process asked them to focus on no more than five areas. In Table 9 we see that PDAs involved in both Year 1 and Year 2 focused their Action Plans on areas related to three sections of the *Local Assessment* that were generally more problematic across all districts (i.e., 50 percent or more of the districts):

- Capacity: District Support of Quality Professional Development;
- Compliance: District Staff Development Committee;
- Quality of Professional Development.

**Table 9. Focus of Action Plans by Year of Involvement with TALL**

Section of <i>Assessment</i>	Probability	Districts Involved in Yr. 1 & Yr. 2 (n=202)		Districts Involved Only in Yr. 2 (n =19)	
		# of <i>Local Assessments</i> Citing a Problem	# & (%) of <i>Action Plans</i> Addressing Cited Problem	# of <i>Local Assessments</i> Citing a Problem	# & (%) of <i>Action Plans</i> Addressing Cited Problem
District Support of Quality Prof Development (PD)	*	186	112 (60%)	17	4 (24%)
Site Staff Development Committee (SD)	NS	78	42 (54%)	8	4 (50%)
District SD Committee	NS	108	58 (54%)	10	3 (30%)
Quality of PD	NS	111	59 (53%)	9	6 (67%)
District PD Plan	*	128	46 (36%)	13	1 (8%)
Reserved SD Revenue	NS	103	27 (26%)	12	3 (25%)
Local Union Support for PD	NS	176	46 (26%)	17	6 (35%)
Continuing Education/License Renewal	NS	138	15 (11%)	14	1 (7%)
Report to the State	NS	74	4 (5%)	9	1 (11%)
Teacher Retention Over Four Years is 75% or Better	NS	116	3 (3%)	16	0 (0%)
MN Graduation Standards	NS	77	3 (4%)	12	0 (0%)

Notes: A chi-square test was used to determine the probability that the percentages in the two groups were significantly different. NS indicates non-significance, \* indicates a probability of p<.05.

Source: *Local Assessments* and *Action Plans* submitted to Education Minnesota.

The following areas, although cited as being problematic by 50 percent or more of the PDAs were less likely to be addressed in this first round of *Action Plans*:

- District Professional Development Plan;
- Reserved Staff Development Revenue;

- Local Union Support for Professional Development.

The *Action Plans* developed by PDAs that joined TALL in Year 2 showed a somewhat similar pattern with two exceptions; these Action Plans were significantly less likely to address two areas:

- District Support for Quality Professional Development;
- District Professional Development Plan.

## **Conclusions and Implications**

At the end of the first year of TALL (2001), participating school districts varied tremendously in their compliance with applicable state legislation on professional development and the quality of their professional development practices. A number of school districts that were struggling with compliance issues experienced positive change in this area by just becoming more aware of the legislative requirements through their participation in TALL. Some school districts, close to or already in compliance with legislative requirements, were able to put their energy into building staff capacity and improving the quality of their professional development opportunities.

The experiences of the PDAs in the first year of TALL highlighted the challenges associated with promoting institutional change, especially when the power to directly make these changes is spread across a number of players associated with the school district. As a result, during the second year of TALL (2001-02), Education Minnesota focused on working with PDAs and district teams to build their knowledge and skills related to orchestrating change. The Phase III, IV and V sessions focused on school leadership, particularly the exercise of leadership without authority; the change process in organizations, and the effective use of data to support change efforts. The conversations included discussions of approaches that full-time teachers might use to find the time, energy, and support to do these things. The TALL design team crafted three key tools for use by the PDAs and their district colleagues: the *Local Assessment*, *Action Plan*, and *Action Research Project*. These tools are designed to be used cyclically to self assess, plan, and take action for continuous improvement.

### **Key evaluation findings from 2001-02 and their implications:**

- 1. Participation in TALL is dynamic and should be expected to change each year.*

In TALL, Education Minnesota has developed a process to help Minnesota school districts and locals (a) self assess their current professional development system in terms of its compliance with Minnesota legislative requirements and overall quality, (b) use this assessment to develop and implement customized action plans that link effective professional development and the continuous improvement of teaching and learning, and (c) create action research plans to get educators working together with data to improve instruction.

A comparative analysis of the comprehensive self-assessments of school districts completed by the PDAs that joined in year one and those that joined in year two shows that the professional development programs in the two groups are in similar condition.

We did see two areas of potential difference—school districts new to TALL were more likely to indicate problems associated with teacher retention and with implementation of the Minnesota Graduation Standards.

**Implications:** Education Minnesota faces the challenge of supporting a process of change across Minnesota school districts that is not linear. That is, PDAs locals, and district participation should be expected to come and go. Each year, as the TALL design team did this past year, training and support will need to be customized in order to address the new or returning PDAs and the developmental status of the school district’s professional development system.

**2. *The content of the Local Assessment, Action Plan, and Action Research Project for a district were generally congruent. The Action Research Projects varied, with some projects focusing on aspects of compliance with Minnesota statutory requirements and others focusing on quality professional development.***

About a third of the PDAs specified an *Action Research Project* that focuses on an aspect of compliance. Another third of the PDAs focused their *Action Research Project* on the quality of professional development.

Many of the *Action Research Projects* outline plans to survey staff in order to be sure the PDAs are addressing their needs. Taken together with the comments of participants after Phases III-V, it is clear that the PDAs understand that they cannot impose a “vision” of quality professional development on the school district—the work must center on what their colleagues want or it will fail.

**Implications:** The PDAs looking to improve the quality of their professional development programs do not have the weight of a legislative mandate behind them. Consequently, efforts focused on quality (as compared to compliance) may require the PDA to make a good case for it with colleagues. These colleagues may at this point be carrying different “mental models” about what constitutes good professional development and may demonstrate only lukewarm support for changing approaches and practices that have been typical in education for a number of years. Furthermore, some PDAs are working in school districts facing severe budgetary constraints; advocating for changes in professional development may be adversely affected by limited time and resources.

Coalitions, collaborations, and partnerships become important at times like these, but may be unfamiliar to teachers who spend most of their time in individual classrooms. Additionally, the timing of staff surveys is critical because if done prematurely, respondents may use their current mental models of quality professional development rather than the research-based approaches

that translate into stronger teaching and learning. PDAs may need to first foster a process of discussion among their colleagues much like they experienced in TALL sessions in order to both build a coalition and create a common vision or mental model of what constitutes quality professional development.

**3. *TALL has trained a cadre of PDAs—change agents—committed to improving the quality of professional development in the schools. Many of these PDAs see themselves, however, facing a challenging task as they return to their school districts.***

In order to help teachers see themselves as people who can have influence beyond their classroom, TALL focused on the idea that all teachers can lead. The participants in TALL understood this message. They also heard that their colleagues need to share their understanding of the ideas that they are bringing back to their schools. Getting this buy-in gives direction to their future activities and is a source of their anxiety.

TALL designed the *Action Plan* and *Action Research Project* to help PDAs apply what they learned in Phases III-V to strengthening the professional development in their schools. The concerns expressed by a number of the PDAs as they finished these sessions suggest they expect the transition from theory to practice to be a daunting one, especially in those cases where a PDA is working alone. A possible next step for Education Minnesota may be a facilitative role with smaller groups of district and local representatives—supporting them as they grapple with specific issues.

***Implications:*** The comments in the reflections of participants in Phases III, IV, and V suggest that PDAs would like more time, continued direction, and support for working on professional development issues with others in their school districts. For the PDAs, the *Local Assessment*, *Action Plan*, and *Action Research Project* are the tools they need to engage others in the school district. This is a welcome challenge for Education Minnesota as it demonstrates that a large cohort of PDAs across the state is willing to continue working on strengthening professional development in their school districts. They need continued support.

## **Appendix A: Role of the TALL Intervention Team**

The TALL intervention has included the creation of an Intervention Team to encourage and facilitate effective professional development in participating school districts and/or local unions where there are unique and special challenges.

The TALL Intervention Team has several on-going members with others participating on an as-needed basis. Education Minnesota staff and representatives of the Department of Children, Families and Learning and the Minnesota Association of School Administrators form the core. The Intervention Team has met twice each month to unravel the complex issues that plague some school districts and local unions as they work toward implementing Minnesota statutes governing staff development, and adopting professional development practices that lead to effective teaching and higher student learning.

Professional Development Activists (PDAs), Support Team members, Field Staff, local union leaders and some school administrators are among those who have referred issues to the Intervention Team. The Intervention Team is responsible for crystallizing the definition of the problem, recommending problem-solving strategies, determining those who could best address the problem, and tracking and supporting those responsible for moving forward.

Approximately 30 issues or concerns have come to the Intervention Team during the first two years of TALL. A variety of problem-solving recommendations have helped all but a handful of local unions and school districts to overcome the obstacles that were impeding their progress. Of those remaining, more intense interventions are being planned.

The TALL Intervention Team has two pieces of evidence that affirm its role.

1. A list of Frequently Asked TALL Questions (FAQs) has been compiled. Answers to these questions were developed with the active involvement of key staff at the Department of Children, Families and Learning and other education organizations. As a result, all of the major education organizations are distributing these answers and using them to give consistent interpretation and implementation suggestions for some of the toughest questions plaguing professional development.
2. Over the past two years, there has been an obvious change in the nature of the issues referred to the Intervention Team. Nearly all of the initial issues referred to the Team centered on compliance. After resolving many of the compliance issues, local unions and school districts have moved on to tackle the issues of quality and compliance. It is the resolution of these issues that will contribute to the development or refinement of professional learning opportunities for educators that lead to our ultimate goal of improving student learning.

## **Appendix B: Representative Narrative Quotes from Respondents after Completion of Phases III, IV and V (2002)**

### **PHASE III**

#### **Key things learned about organizational change**

“We must become the change we want to see.”

“You cannot mandate change”

“Change is more likely to be successful and long-lasting if it comes from within rather than mandated.”

#### **Key things learned about leadership**

“One leader should not provide or dictate the vision or direction to the group. Instead, the group needs to create the goal, and the leader facilitates the group.”

“Teachers lead through influence, not authority.”

“Good principals are hero-makers, not heroes.”

#### **Key things learned about using data**

“Use it!”

“Data can be used to show whatever you want to show.”

“Data can be misleading.”

#### **Next steps**

“Continue to advance the idea that control of funds is not enough. We must also align our PD program with our district goals and a program of curricular/instructional improvement.”

“I am not yet on the Staff Development Committee but hope to attend meetings anyways so I can understand more about this. I will be on next year I’m told.”

“We are starting from zero. We do not have a Staff Development committee.”

“I need to find someone to work with me on this.”

## **Concerns**

“We would like to get district administration to join our TALL team.”

“We would like more time to collaborate with our TALL team and work on our Action Plan.”

“Too few local people involved—our programs are being gutted, so we have an uphill battle.”

“Our challenge is to keep this process alive and well in our current climate (BIG budget cuts, schools closing, etc.)

“Why hasn’t someone from Education Minnesota come out to the locals to explain what TALL is so more ownership and interest could have helped TALL take off?”

“Did we complete our Action Plan correctly?”

“Putting theory into practice.”

“Our staff development team members need to become informed...not interested in coming to classes.”

## **PHASE IV**

### **Things learned**

“There are many more professional development opportunities to offer...besides workshops/conferences.”

“Professional practice is more than just instruction; how content is delivered/taught is critical—we are powerful models!”

“Education Minnesota is not all talk and no do.”

“Teacher collaboration is so important; we need to continue to fight to get it.”

“We won’t get more time so we need to make better and more creative use of what we have.”

“It’s time to look at staff development as more than a K-12 in-service day.”

## **Mental model**

“Groups of people planning and working together for a common goal.”

“Topics that are implemented to increase student achievement.”

“Administration and educators deciding together what needs to be changed after researching the topic.”

“If I was going for a PhD in education I’d care more about this silly question.”

## **How action research will be used**

“We will begin with identifying a question, planning for research, and using the results to complete gap analysis to determine steps necessary to meet our preferred plan.”

“We need to take the data we collected and come up with a long term goal we are heading for and make sure everyone knows about it.”

“I feel I have the ‘nuts and bolts’, but how do I actually do it? Putting it into practice seems somewhat daunting.”

## **Need to accomplish**

“I need to re-familiarize myself with the Action Plan.”

“District Staff Development Plan needs to bring all district PD efforts into alignment.”

## **Derailers**

“Too many irons in the fire right now—restructuring, finance, etc. The priorities are the obstacles.”

“I believe in this and think it’s a great thing, but no one in my local wants to know or be involved. The SD District level seems to see me as a ‘watchdog.’ Help!”

## **PHASE V**

### **Has *Action Plan* changed?**

“No, but no one is taking the lead or helping the PDAs implement it. Staff Development needs to designate someone to implement the plan.”

“The plan hasn’t changed, but we may need to adjust the plan because of budget cuts.”

“The plan has changed dramatically as we’ve gotten more input from staff and administration.”

“Our Action Plan was based on surface issues. Now depth is needed.”

“We’ve deleted one goal in order to better focus on the remaining two.”

### **Lingering concerns with *Action Research Project***

“After completing all of this work, it won’t change the attitudes in our district.”

“I still don’t know what I will do exactly with ARP.”

“How much time will this take for me, and who’s going to help?”

“Is administration willing to give up total control?”

### **What needs to happen?**

“There needs to be a much larger group of people willing to make a change. In a district that employs 90 teaching staff, currently six of us work on the Professional Development Committee and only one is involved in TALL.”

“Good question!”

“Our board needs to get away from the idea that ‘seat time’ is the only important part of teaching and learning.”

“Collaboration among teachers within a site.”

### Appendix C: Phase III Trends in Reflections of Participants

%	C-1. Key things learned about ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE
34	You can't mandate or force change
27	Change that comes from within lasts longer
24	Change takes time; change is slow; change is one step at a time
18	Long-term change needs to have the buy-in of the group
17	Change brings discomfort, uncertainty, conflict
13	"Positive Deviants" are important to change in a system
11	When you change, you don't have to get it right the first time
11	When you want to change, start with a vision, not a plan
7	Change is always occurring; the task is to use it as a positive process
3	All individuals are change agents; all have responsibility for change process

%	C-2. Key things learned about LEADERSHIP
69	Leadership is a group process/shared responsibility/team effort/facilitation
38	Every teacher has the potential to be a leader
10	Leaders nurture others to be leaders
8	Leaders lead by example; they model what they want to happen
2	Leadership is making happen what you believe in
2	Leaders help people engage their passions
2	Leadership is NOT a set of qualities or traits

%	C-3. Key things learned about DATA
45	Interpreting data is tricky, essential, and takes care
38	Data can be used to improve schools/support action
23	Beware of flawed/incomplete/unreliable data
16	Numbers don't give a complete picture; use quantitative and qualitative data
8	Use more than once source or type of data
7	Outside/broad perspectives are helpful when interpreting data
5	You need the right data to answer your question

%	C-4. Our NEXT STEPS when we return to our school district
37	Develop/monitor/reevaluate our Action Plan
36	Create/beef up/bring data to/refocus our District Staff Development Committee
33	Bring the TALL story/ideas to the staff
17	Get more people involved; find help
15	Bring Action Plan to school board/administration
10	Create/beef up/bring data to/refocus our Site Staff Development Committee
8	Get the union more involved

%	C-5. LINGERING CONCERNS
23	What will happen if state/Education Minnesota drops support of TALL?
15	Getting staff/teachers/colleagues involved
15	Effectively bringing TALL message back to.....
9	No time; work is overwhelming
8	Getting administration on board
6	Getting union members on board
5	We need more guidance/direction on how to proceed with next steps
4	How to locate quality staff development options

Source: Phase III Reflection Exercise; n = 183 PDA teams.

## Appendix D: Phase IV Trends in Reflections of Participants

%	D-1. Things I learned this weekend
28	Good resources (articles, handouts, websites, hands-on plans)
26	What Action Research is
24	Techniques and strategies for managing time
24	Creative ways to incorporate professional development
15	Importance of working with others (sharing, collaboration, communication)
12	Importance of data
11	Ladder of Inference
9	How to develop a good question/How to write a good plan
9	Importance of perspective (don't pass judgment, take small steps, keep focus)

%	D-2. My MENTAL MODEL of quality professional development
32	Collaboration (groups like Faculty and Administration working together)
31	Something that furthers student achievement
21	Using data (e.g., Needs Assessment) to guide activities
18	On-going cycle of teachers teaching and learning
9	Goals of individual, site, and district are aligned
6	Professional learning communities

%	D-3. What would my mental model look like IN PRACTICE?
25	Teachers collaborating to solve problems
8	Students engaged in learning
7	Teams of teachers focused on student needs
5	A variety of relevant activities
4	Teachers using best practices

%	D-4. How will you USE ACTION RESEARCH?
26	To improve our professional development
23	To develop a question about an issue and follow through
23	Collect and study data
10	Survey staff
8	Determine what teachers and students need in order to improve achievement
2	Teams will prioritize areas needing research

%	D-5. Do you have any QUESTIONS or CONCERNS about Action Research?
5	I need more information about Action Research
5	Where am I going to find the time?
3	How do I get my colleagues involved?
3	How are we going to gather the data?

%	D-6. What do you NEED TO ACCOMPLISH now that Phase IV is done?
38	Inform our staff; get the word out; communicate and collaborate
27	Get the committees to write better policies and goals
16	Reexamine or modify our Action Plans
14	Come up with a question; formulate a research plan
9	Organize and analyze the data
7	Develop a handbook or survey
7	Get more people involved; build ownership

%	D-7. What could DERAILED YOU?
17	Negative attitudes/differences of opinion/opposition
12	Administration doesn't support us
9	Limited funding/budget cuts
8	Lack of time
6	Indifference/Complacency
4	Various pressing issues (e.g., consolidation, new buildings)
1	Legislature

%	D-8. How will you DEAL WITH what might derail you?
15	Continue educating people/inform and recruit staff/communicate
7	Keep my focus/don't give up
4	Ask for help
2	Ask administrators to share our vision
1	Research and data

Source: Phase IV Reflection exercise; n = 180 PDA teams.

## Appendix E: Phase V Trends in Reflections of Participants

%	E-1. Who else is working to improve professional development in your district?
48	District Professional Development Committee
36	Principal
30	Superintendent
29	Teacher(s)
24	Teacher union
23	Site Professional Development Committee
15	School Board
14	Curriculum Coordinator
7	Non-licensed staff
6	Staff Development Coordinator
2	Community/parents

%	E-2. What important ROLES ARE MISSING in work related to TALL?
30	Administrators
28	Teaching staff
18	School board
15	Union
12	Community and parents
10	Staff Development
3	Non-licensed staff need to be better informed

%	E-3. How will you get these people involved?
48	Share TALL information and products with them
28	Ask them to become involved (SD meetings, TALL workshops)
12	Ask for input, invite their ideas (surveys, focus groups)

%	E-4. How has your Action Plan changed? What changes are you making?
35	Changing, narrowing, or broadening the goals
26	No changes planned (may have updated it)
21	We have already met at least one of our Action Plan goals
10	Emphasizing data-driven goals; using Action Research
9	Created or revised our district or site SD committees
6	We are in the process of creating an Action Plan
5	More people involved in the District/Site committees
2	Adjusting our plan because of budget changes

%	E-5. How prepared is your TALL team to implement your <i>Action Research Project</i> ?
17	We're already implementing the ARP (High preparation)
30	We'll be ready by the end of the school year
39	We'll be ready by the beginning of the next school year
14	It's hard to say when we'll be ready (Low preparation)

%	E-6. What are your lingering concerns?
37	Getting more staff to "buy in" and participate
27	Having enough time to develop/carry out <i>Action Research Project</i>
15	Getting support and cooperation from administration
10	Developing and sustaining effective SD committees
8	Adequate funding
8	Getting complete and accurate data
3	Not sure how to carry out our <i>Action Research Project</i>

E-7. How optimistic are you that your TALL participation will have a noticeable effect on professional development?

<b>Level of Optimism</b>	<b>In my school</b>	<b>In our district</b>
Very Optimistic	26%	19%
Optimistic	53%	52%
Somewhat Optimistic	19%	28%
Not Very Optimistic	2%	1%

%	E-8. What needs to happen for professional development to make a tangible difference in teaching and learning?
46	Educators need to take it seriously (believe in its value, be actively involved)
21	Educators feel a shared responsibility for outcomes
17	Administration and School Board share responsibility for SD process
14	Adequate time for meaningful SD
13	We keep our focus on our SD plan
7	Strong district and site SD committees
4	Strong communication to staff and community about value of SD

**As a result of TALL, what tangible accomplishments have you had so far related to:**

%	E-9. Leadership development
38	Improved district and site SD committees (formed, reformed, wider leadership)
18	TALL-trained people influencing others (informally, presentations, training)
6	More support from administration/union
5	Various groups initiating collaboration with SD committee
2	SD committees initiating SD opportunities

%	E-10. Initiating and sustaining a change process
25	District and site SD committees meet regularly; more stakeholders involved
23	Action Plan developed; some goals met
13	TALL-trained people influencing others
8	More communication and collaboration among educator groups
2	District SD process moving toward compliance with state statutes

%	E-11. Using data to guide and support change
23	We're using data to help us align district goals and SD opportunities
14	Discussions/training for collecting and using data

Source: Phase V Reflection exercise; n = 181 PDA teams.

## **Appendix F: Core Items from *Local Staff Development Assessment***

It was not possible to create an average score for all items in each section because most PDAs did not reply to all items. A few core items that virtually all PDAs answered were chosen for each section of the *Local Assessment*. If a PDA marked *Yes* to all of these items, professional development in that section was considered to be strong. If it marked one or more items *No*, it was considered to be weak.

### **District Committee (Compliance)**

- Does your district have a district staff development committee?
- Is there a teacher majority on the district committee?
- Has the district committee developed and adopted a district staff development plan based on school board educational goals?
- Did your local school board approve the plan?

### **District Plan (Compliance)**

- Does your district staff development plan address improved student achievement of standards?
- Does your district staff development plan address improved staff collaboration and mentoring?
- Does the district staff development committee communicate the plan to the sites?
- Does the districts staff development committee consult with sites as they develop site plans?

### **Site Professional Development Teams (Compliance)**

- Has each site developed a site professional development plan?

### **Reserved Staff Development Revenue (Compliance)**

- Has your school district reserved 2% of its basic revenue for staff development purposes?
- Does your district reserve 25% (of the 2%) for district wide staff development efforts?
- Does your district set aside 25% (of the 2%) for best practices grants?
- Does your district allocate 50% (of the 2%) to the sites?

### **Report to the State (Compliance)**

- Is your district staff development committee aware of the required report?
- Does the report reflect the district's staff development plan?

### **Continuing Education/License Rule (Compliance)**

- Is there an intentional relationship between the district's staff development committee/site professional development teams and the district's Continuing Education Committee?

### **Minnesota Graduation Standards (Compliance)**

- Are Minnesota Graduation Standards an integral part of your local staff development plans?
- Does a portion of your district staff development plan focus on graduation standards implementation?
- Have teachers at your site had adequate and on-going learning opportunities about standards-based instruction in general?
- Are the Profile of Learning standards woven into your local curriculum scope and sequence?

### **Teacher Retention (Capacity)**

- District retains at least 75% of its teachers in past four years?

### **Quality of Professional Development (Quality)**

- Do student needs serve as the basis for teacher learning and professional development?
- Are teacher needs assessed and used as a basis for professional development?

### **District Support of Quality Professional Development (Quality)**

- Are dialogue and reflection an ongoing part of professional development activities?
- Do professional development activities include opportunities for teachers to obtain useful feedback on their practice from colleagues?

### **Local Teacher Union (Capacity)**

- Local union leadership believes and acts if professional development is union work.
- Does your local union have a professional/instructional issues committee or chair?
- Does your local union include professional development in its budget?
- Does your local union contract have language that addresses professional development?

## Appendix G: Minnesota School Districts with PDAs Participating in TALL

MEEP Region	District	Involved in Year 1 only	Involved in Year 2 only	Involved in Years 1 & 2	Not Involved Years 1 or 2	
1	Ada-Borup			x		
	Badger				x	
	Bagley			x		
	Clearbrook-Gonvick	x				
	Climax	x				
	Crookston			x		
	East Grand Forks			x		
	Fertile-Beltrami				x	
	Fisher				x	
	Fosston				x	
	Goodridge			x		
	Grygla				x	
	Greenbush-Middle River			x		
	Kittson Central				x	
	Mahnomen			x		
	Marshall County Central				x	
	Norman County East			x		
	Norman County West	x				
	Oklee			x		
	Plummer				x	
	Red Lake Falls				x	
	Roseau					x
	Stephen-Argyle Central					x
	Thief River Falls				x	
	Tri-County				x	
	Warren-Alvarado-Oslo				x	
	Warroad				x	
	Waubun				x	
Win-e-Mac				x		
2	Bemidji			x		
	Blackduck			x		
	Cass Lake			x		
	Chisholm			x		
	Deer River			x		
	Ely				x	
	Eveleth-Gilbert				x	
	Grand Meadow			x		
	Grand Rapids	x				
	Greenway				x	
	Hibbing	x				
	Hill City				x	
	International Falls			x		
	Kelliher			x		
	Lake Of The Woods				x	
	Littlefork-Big Falls				x	
	Mountain Iron-Buhl				x	
	Nashwauk-Keewatin				x	
	Nett Lake				x	
	Red Lake			x		
	South Koochiching County			x		
	St. Louis County			x		

MEEP Region	District	Involved in Year 1 only	Involved in Year 2 only	Involved in Years 1 & 2	Not Involved Years 1 or 2
	Virginia		x		
3	Barnum			x	
	Carlton			x	
	Cloquet			x	
	Cook County	x			
	Cromwell			x	
	Duluth			x	
	Esko			x	
	Floodwood				x
	Fond Du Lac				x
	Hermantown			x	
	Lake Superior			x	
	McGregor				x
	Mesabi East			x	
	Moose Lake			x	
	Proctor			x	
	Willow River	x			
Wrenshall				x	
4	Alexandria			x	
	Ashby				x
	Barnesville			x	
	Battle Lake			x	
	Brandon			x	
	Breckenridge			x	
	Browns Valley		x		
	Chokio-Alberta				x
	Cyrus				x
	Detroit Lakes			x	
	Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton			x	
	Evansville				x
	Fergus Falls			x	
	Frazee			x	
	Hancock				x
	Hawley			x	
	Herman-Norcross			x	
	Lake Park-Audubon	x			
	Minnewaska			x	
	Moorhead			x	
	Morris Area			x	
	New York Mills	x			
	Osakis			x	
	Parkers Prairie			x	
	Pelican Rapids	x			
	Perham			x	
	Pine Point				x
	Rothsay			x	
	Ulen-Hitterdal			x	
	Underwood			x	
	West Central Area				x
	Wheaton				x

MEEP Region	District	Involved in Year 1 only	Involved in Year 2 only	Involved in Years 1 & 2	Not Involved Years 1 or 2	
5	Aitkin				x	
	Bertha-Hewitt			x		
	Brainerd			x		
	Browerville				x	
	Crosby-Ironton			x		
	Cross Lake				x	
	Eagle Valley				x	
	Foley			x		
	Henning			x		
	Laporte			x		
	Little Falls	x				
	Long Prairie-Grey Eagle			x		
	Menahga			x		
	Nevis				x	
	Northland				x	
	Onamia				x	
	Park Rapids			x		
	Pequot Lakes			x		
	Pierz			x		
	Pillager			x		
	Pine River				x	
	Royalton				x	
	Sebeka				x	
	Staples-Motley				x	
	Swanville					x
	Upsala Area					x
	Verndale					x
Wadena-Deer Creek				x		
Walker-Hackensack				x		
6	ACGC	x				
	Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa			x		
	Bellingham				x	
	Benson			x		
	BOLD	x				
	Buffalo Lake-Hector				x	
	Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley				x	
	Dawson-Boyd		x			
	Hutchinson			x		
	Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg			x		
	Lac Qui Parle			x		
	Lester Prairie		x			
	Litchfield	x				
	MACCRAY			x		
	Minnesota River Valley	x				
	Montevideo	x				
	New London-Spicer			x		
	Ortonville			x		
	Renville County West	x				
	Willmar				x	
Yellow Medicine East			x			

MEEP Region	District	Involved in Year 1 only	Involved in Year 2 only	Involved in Years 1 & 2	Not Involved Years 1 or 2
7	Albany			x	
	Annandale	x			
	Becker			x	
	Big Lake				x
	Braham				x
	Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose			x	
	Cambridge	x			
	Chisago Lakes			x	
	Dassel-Cokato			x	
	Delano			x	
	East Central			x	
	Eden Valley Watkins			x	
	Elk River			x	
	Hinckley	x			
	Holdingford				x
	Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted				x
	Isle				x
	Kimball	x			
	Maple Lake			x	
	Melrose	x			
	Milaca				x
	Monticello	x			
	Mora			x	
	North Branch			x	
	Ogilvie			x	
	Paynesville Area				x
	Pine City			x	
	Princeton			x	
	Rockford			x	
	Rocori (Cold Spring)			x	
	Rush City				x
	Sartell			x	
	Sauk Center	x			
Sauk Rapids			x		
St. Cloud			x		
St. Croix (Stillwater)	x				
St. Michael/Albertville			x		
8	Adrian			x	
	Balaton			x	
	Brewster/Round Lake			x	
	Canby			x	
	Cedar Mountain	x			
	Edgerton			x	
	Ellsworth			x	
	Fulda			x	
	Heron L-Okabena (SW Star)			x	
	Hills-Beaver Creek				x
	Lake Benton			x	
	Lakeview				x
	Luverne			x	
	Lynd			x	
	Marshall			x	
	Milroy				x

Minneota x

MEEP Region	District	Involved in Year 1 only	Involved in Year 2 only	Involved in Years 1 & 2	Not Involved Years 1 or 2
8,					
cont.	Murray County Central			x	
	Pipestone-Jasper			x	
	Redwood Falls			x	
	Round Lake				x
	RTR				x
	Tracy	x			
	Wabasso				x
	Westbrook-Walnut Grove			x	
	Worthington			x	
9	Alden-Conger			x	
	Blue Earth-Delavan-Elmore			x	
	Butterfield-Odin				x
	Central				x
	Chatfield				x
	Cleveland				x
	Comfrey			x	
	Fairmont			x	
	GFW			x	
	Glencoe-Silver Lake	x			
	Granada-Huntley-East Chain			x	
	Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton				x
	Jackson County Central			x	
	Jordan			x	
	Lake Crystal-Wellcome			x	
	Le Center			x	
	Le Sueur-Henderson			x	
	Madelia			x	
	Mankato	x			
	Maple River			x	
	Martin County West			x	
	McLeod West			x	
	Montgomery-Lonsdale				x
	Mountain Lake			x	
	New Prague				x
	New Ulm			x	
	Nicollet				x
	Red Rock Central			x	
	Sibley East			x	
	Sleepy Eye			x	
	Springfield			x	
	St. Clair			x	
	St. James			x	
	St. Peter				x
	Truman	x			
	United S Central			x	
	Waseca			x	
	Waterville-Elysian			x	
	Windom Area			x	

MEEP Region	District	Involved in Year 1 only	Involved in Year 2 only	Involved in Years 1 & 2	Not Involved Years 1 or 2
10	Albert Lea	x			
	Austin				x
	Blooming Prairie				x
	Byron	x			
	Caledonia				x
	Cannon Falls			x	
	Chatfield		x		
	Chosen Valley				x
	Dover-Eyota			x	
	Faribault			x	
	Fillmore Central		x		
	Glenville-Emmons		x		
	Goodhue		x		
	Grand Meadow				x
	Hayfield			x	
	Houston			x	
	Kasson-Mantorville			x	
	Kenyon-Wanamingo	x			
	Kingsland			x	
	La Crescent		x		
	Lake City			x	
	Lanesboro				x
	Le Roy-Ostrander			x	
	Lewiston-Altura			x	
	Lyle			x	
	Mabel-Canton				x
	Medford				x
	Northfield			x	
	NRHEG			x	
	Owatonna			x	
	Pine Island	x			
	Plainview	x			
	Red Wing	x			
	Rochester			x	
	Rushford-Peterson				x
	Southland			x	
	Spring Grove	x			
	St. Charles			x	
	Stewartville		x		
	Triton	x			
	Wabasha-Kellogg	x			
	Winona			x	
	Zumbro Education District				x
	Zumbrota-Mazeppa			x	

MEEP Region	District	Involved in Year 1 only	Involved in Year 2 only	Involved in Years 1 & 2	Not Involved Years 1 or 2
11	Anoka Hennepin			x	
	Belle Plaine			x	
	Bloomington	x			
	Brooklyn Center			x	
	Burnsville	x			
	Centennial			x	
	Chaska				x
	Columbia Heights	x			
	Eden Prairie			x	
	Edina			x	
	Farmington	x			
	Forest Lake			x	
	Fridley			x	
	Hastings			x	
	Hopkins	x			
	Intermediate District 287			x	
	Intermediate District 917			x	
	Inver Grove Heights			x	
	Lakeville			x	
	Mahtomedi			x	
	Minneapolis			x	
	Minnetonka				x
	Mound Westonka			x	
	Mounds View			x	
	NE Metro			x	
	North St Paul-Maplewood			x	
	Orono			x	
	Osseo			x	
	Prior Lake			x	
	Randolph				x
	Richfield			x	
	Robbinsdale			x	
	Rosemount-AV-Eagan (DCUE)			x	
	Roseville	x			
	Shakopee				x
	South St Paul	x			
	South Washington County			x	
	Spring Lake Park				x
	St. Anthony				x
	St. Francis			x	
	St. Louis Park				x
	St. Paul			x	
	Stillwater	x			
	Waconia			x	
	Watertown-Mayer			x	
	Wayzata			x	

West St. Paul	x
White Bear Lake	x

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MEEP Region	District	Involved in Year 1 only	Involved in Year 2 only	Involved in Years 1 & 2	Not Involved Years 1 or 2
Other	Crow River Special Education			x	
	Southern Plains Coop			x	
	State Residential Schools			x	

Source: Department of Children, Families and Learning (CFL) and Education Minnesota. MEEP (Minnesota Education Effectiveness Program) Regions are geographical sections of Minnesota served by the Curriculum and Instruction Division of the Department of Children, Families, and Learning.

<b>APPENDIX H. A RUBRIC FOR CHARACTERIZING DISTRICT COMPLIANCE WITH STAFF DEVELOPMENT STATUTES</b>			
<b>MN Law</b>	<b>Emerging (none to minimal compliance)</b>	<b>Developing (incomplete compliance)</b>	<b>Proficient (evidence of compliance)</b>
122A.60, Subd. 1  Committee	- may not have district and/or site committees  - missing required personnel	- district and site committees exist, BUT:  - missing required personnel	- district & site committees are complete and meet regularly; (some fine-tuning may be needed)
	- no connection/alignment between district & site committees	- little connection/alignment between district & site committees	
	- no teacher input for committee formation	- little teacher input on committee composition	
122A.60 Subd. 2  Plan	- no district and/or site plans	- no connection/alignment between district & site plans	- good connection/alignment between district & site plans
		- little teacher participation in creation of plans - no reference to student or teacher data when creating district & site plans	- teachers participate in plan creation - some attention to using student and teacher data to create district & site plans
122A.60 Subd. 3  Outcomes	- little/no alignment between plan outcomes & staff development activities	- some attempts made to align plan outcomes & staff development activities	- staff development activities address outcomes of plans
	- no mention of evaluating the effectiveness of activities	- no mention of evaluating the effectiveness of activities	- some evaluation of the effectiveness of activities
	- implement 1 or 2 outcomes	- implement 2 or 3 outcomes	- implement 4 or more outcomes
	- plan does not address: using student test data; best practice methods; opportunity for peer collaboration; time for follow-up; mentoring; peer coaching; violence prevention; site-based management skills; overall SD quality	- plan includes some outcomes: using student test data; best practice methods; opportunity for peer collaboration; time for follow-up; mentoring; peer coaching; violence prevention; site-based management skills; overall SD quality	- plan implements staff development outcomes as articulated in Minnesota laws.
122A.61  Revenue	- inappropriate allocation of 2% reserve	- appropriate allocation of 2% reserve	- appropriate dispersal of 2% reserve (may exceed 2%)
	- no teacher involvement with funding decisions	- little/no teacher involvement with funding decisions	- teachers involved with funding decisions
	- no site control over funds	- some site control over funds	- sites in control of their funds
	- no Best Practice grants offered; no criteria for grants	- improvement needed for granting process; few criteria for accessing grants	- criteria in place for Best Practice grants

Note: Rubric used to establish developmental status of school district professional development systems; criteria derived from Minnesota's laws pertaining to Staff Development Programs and Reserved Revenue for Staff Development.; rubric based on a content analysis of the over 200 Action Plans submitted by PDAs to TALL (Teachers as Learners and Leaders) in the Spring of 2001.