Professional Learning Communities and Student Achievement

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Abstract

An exploratory quantitative study of professional learning communities and student achievement in the largest school system in the state of North Carolina provides evidence to support systemic implementation of professional learning community practices and activities. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore the impact of teachers’ perceptions of elements and practices directly related to essential professional learning community characteristics for student achievement in the area of mathematics. There were differences in mean scores for high performing schools in Focus on Learning (M=3.06), Collaborative Culture (M= 3.23), Instructional Strategies (M=3.11), Common Formative Assessments (M= 3.03), Overall Impact (M=3.06), and Support and Allocation (M=2.89). When the ANOVA revealed a significant difference between schools with diverse levels of math performance for a characteristic or related element of professional learning communities, a Tukey’s Honestly Significant Difference procedure was employed to determine which levels of mathematics performance differed significantly from one another. Results indicate implications for employing essential professional learning community characteristics and adopting a holistic professional development model to positively influence student achievement in mathematics.