

Title: The Perceived Impact of the Curriculum Administrator in Facilitating a Vision of Learning in Small, Rural Pennsylvania School Districts

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One important element of school district reform involves quality district leadership. Researchers have shown that effective school leadership requires numerous responsibilities including knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Principals typically have difficulty being strong leaders in this particular area due to the high demands placed on them to manage their buildings. Many large school districts employ a curriculum administrator who is responsible for coordinating curriculum at the district level, relieving principals of that responsibility. However, many small rural school districts lack the resources to hire curriculum administrators and the task of coordinating curriculum is typically assigned to the building principals, teachers, or overlooked.

This qualitative study examined the perceptions of rural school administrators, teachers and school board members in relation to the effectiveness of curriculum development, implementation and evaluation, and the impact these practices have on the vision of student learning in school districts with a curriculum administrator and without a curriculum administrator. The most critical finding suggests that in districts with a curriculum administrator, the position had a positive impact on the district's curriculum

and academic program. Another important finding was that the vision of student learning was achieved at a higher level in districts with curriculum administrators than districts without this organizational structure.

The results of this study provide insights into the organizational structure, belief systems, and curriculum development procedures in both types of districts, as well as performance data on the Pennsylvania School System of Assessment.