In the following report, Hanover Research reviews leadership structures found in K-12 district offices. We present research on the key organizational concepts underlying district structure and the efficacy of districts in managing new initiatives. In addition, we discuss best practices for the structuring of district leadership. Finally, we profile the leadership structures of four successful districts.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Recent scholarship has noted that district-level leadership is essential for the success of reform initiatives at the school-level. Researchers at the Center for the Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Washington, for example, have highlighted the critical role that district leadership plays in the reform of teaching and learning:

Central offices and the people who work in them are not simply part of the background noise in school improvement. Rather, school district central office administrators exercise essential leadership, in partnership with school leaders, to build capacity throughout public educational systems for teaching and learning improvements.¹

Meredith Honig, an expert on educational leadership and the lead researcher on the aforementioned study, has observed elsewhere that many school reform efforts have collapsed without central office support. In fact, the need for strong district leadership has often been most apparent in instances of failed reforms, and the research on effective leadership remains limited.²

Yet surprisingly little research focuses on the effectiveness of particular K-12 district and school structures. There does not appear to be much research on which types of structures lead either to especially effective administration or to especially effective instruction. Indeed, those rare studies that discuss the effects of leadership structures on district outcomes refuse to prescribe a single structure as ideal, suggesting instead that the qualities of leadership are more important. They emphasize that “constructs of leadership” will vary according to the particular context and environment of the district. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers, a UK-based trade organization, puts it plainly: “Leadership is about more than organisational or management restructuring.”³

Most are less bold in their assertions. Studies of effective leadership, however, often point towards models that distribute management and other responsibilities to a team of subordinates, rather than those that promote unilateral decision-making and action-taking.⁴

organizational structures that it would be challenging to test types against each other or to identify clear best practices. Extant literature has instead focused on defining the ideal traits of effective district offices, including the qualities of effective leaders.

**OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT**

In the following report, Hanover Research reviews leadership structures found in K-12 district offices. We present research on the key organizational concepts underlying district structure and the efficacy of districts in managing new initiatives. In addition, we discuss best practices for the structuring of district leadership. Finally, we profile the leadership structures of four successful districts. The report is divided into two sections:

- **Section I: Concepts and Best Practices** – This section provides a conceptual framework for comparing various practices in district leadership. It covers both structural and operational aspects of leadership. In addition, the section examines the structures of two districts that have received praise for their leadership practices.
- **Section II: Profiles of District Leadership Structures** – This section profiles the leadership structures of four districts which have garnered attention for their effective leadership.

Below we summarize key findings from our research in these areas.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- **Structural change alone is insufficient to sustain reform or manage new initiatives.** Functional and operational changes must accompany the modification of structures. Districts should rethink their relationships with schools by assigning administrators to case-manage a subset of schools, or by encouraging administrators to aid schools in addressing all aspects of a problem. Additionally, districts should consider administrators’ effectiveness in three key roles: organizational leadership, public leadership, and instructional leadership.

- **While experts have been slow to identify a single particular model of effective school and district leadership, most have identified collaboration and shared authority as key principles.** Literature on school district leadership structures emphasizes the value of distributed leadership in managing new initiatives. According to a distributed model of leadership, districts decentralize leadership by vesting many individuals or teams with complementary authority. At the district level, a chief academic officer may assume duties normally reserved for a superintendent, and across levels within a given district constituent schools and communities may be given greater autonomy in implementing initiatives.

- **Districts that have achieved recognition for their organizational coherence differ in the leadership structures they employ.** Miami-Dade County Public Schools, winner of the 2012 Broad Prize for success among urban school districts, has been praised for having all district officers report directly to the superintendent. Long Beach
Unified School District, a 2003 Broad Prize winner and finalist in recent years, has been noted for its more decentralized use of distributed leadership.

- **Regarding our partner district, three notable peer districts utilize surprisingly similar models of leadership.** All employ a superintendent who exercises general executive authority and two or more subordinate district officers. In two of the three peers profiled, all district administrators report directly to the superintendent. One peer, Franklin Public Schools, employs an assistant superintendent to whom other district administrators report. One non-peer district, MSD-Warren Township, a recent grantee in the Race to the Top-District competition, differs from the other peer districts covered in this report in assigning different cabinet officers to oversee prekindergarten to 6th grade education and 7th grade to adult education.
SECTION I: CONCEPTS AND BEST PRACTICES

In this section we review scholarly literature on the structuring of district and school leadership with an eye to structures and practices that facilitate change. We also examine the structures of districts that have been recognized for their organizational best practices.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

MODELS AND TYPES OF LEADERSHIP

In order to gain an appreciation of the options for district leadership structures, it’s helpful to review some key conceptual distinctions that experts make among the types of practices in which leaders engage and the leadership structures that may impact district-school collaboration. In a 2001 report the Task Force on School District Leadership of The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) provides two taxonomies that are useful for this purpose. The task force, composed of leaders from education, government, and business, convened to identify best practices in school district leadership. While diverse and even divided in many of their views, the members nonetheless collectively identified three types of district leadership which “often overlap (and are equally complementary).”

The first type of district leadership, which they called organizational leadership, is that which establishes the norms, processes, and support structures needed to sustain and grow the district and schools. An organizational leader develops and enforces expectations for teachers and administrators while also supporting these groups and maintaining a professional climate. In addition, an organizational leader assumes responsibility for the prudent management of resources for the instructional system. Public leadership is also essential for district administrators as they confront the political forces at work in their districts. This form of leadership involves communicating with stakeholders, such as board members and school staff, to keep them informed and manage their expectations. It also entails managing relations with the media and other public entities outside the school system. Finally, instructional leadership establishes the vision of teaching and learning in the district. An administrator who exercises this form of leadership prioritizes the often conflicting goals of the district in light of one guiding value: student learning. Acting as an instructional leader requires examining organizational structure and function to ensure that they are conducive to high student achievement.

With respect to structure, the IEL report includes two “models” of district leadership structure. However, members of the IEL task force caution against placing faith in a structural model as the linchpin of district success, as information on such models and their success is limited. Furthermore, the task force observes that the structures often termed

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6 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
“models” in educational leadership circles are more accurately described as arrangements or sets of arrangements, presumably because these structures do not always embody a well-described theoretical structure of district functioning. Thus, the IEL report includes descriptions of two such arrangements with the proviso that many others are possible.7

Under the first structure, policy governance leadership, the school board assumes responsibility for policy-making while the superintendent exercises an administrative or executive role. As policymakers, the members of board collectively determine the “ends” for the school system and leave the superintendent free to select the means to these ends. Ultimately, boards serve as trustees of the public on this model, while the superintendent is an executive overseen and evaluated by the board. One potential advantage of this model is that it establishes a clear, central authority, who is accountable for all administrative matters.8

In contrast to policy governance leadership, non-traditional leadership disperses the authority typically vested in the superintendent and adopts a distributed or team leadership model. For instance, an administrator may serve as the “Chief Academic Officer” who tends to all issues related to teaching and learning, while the superintendent deals primarily with matters of management, such as district politics and union relations. Sometimes this arrangement assumes the form of a partnership in which the superintendent and administrator are more or less equals in authority; sometimes the arrangement is simply the delegation of a superior’s duties to a subordinate officer. Such decentralization or delegation of authority may even extend beyond the bounds of the district office: both individual schools and private contractors may assume responsibility for functions traditionally performed by the district. Although the task force offers no endorsement for this distributed model over policy governance leadership, their report notes that decentralization allows district leaders to focus on their areas of strength.9

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7 Ibid., pp. 9-11.
8 Ibid., pp. 9-10.
9 Ibid., p. 10.
Richard F. Elmore, writing in 2000 for the Albert Shanker Institute, advocated for a “large-scale” approach to developing new structures for school leadership. While the paper focuses on the mission of advocacy, there were some similarities in the ideas he had for effective leadership structures compared to those supported by the IEL (discussed above). His “five principles […] for a model of distributed leadership,” akin to the non-traditional leadership model above, include the following:

- The purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role.\(^\text{10}\)
- Instructional improvement requires continuous learning.
- Learning requires modeling.
- The roles and activities of leadership flow from the expertise required for learning and improvement, not from the formal dictates of the institution.
- The exercise of authority requires reciprocity of accountability and capacity.\(^\text{11}\)

As will be witnessed in the “Practices” discussion and case studies that follow, while experts have been slow to identify a single particular model of effective school and district leadership, most have identified collaboration and shared authority as key principles.

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\(^{10}\) Elmore identifies several different “roles” of leadership: policy, professional, system, school, and practice.

PRACTICES

In practice, leaders of any type or following any model require an effective team to implement change. A 2010 study of district central offices in urban school districts by the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (CSTP) at the University of Washington stresses that proper functioning of the district central office is an indispensable catalyst for reforms throughout the district. This is especially true for improvements in teaching and learning. While the study’s authors note that the value of reforming the central office transcends any particular initiative, they also observe that it is “a necessary complement to other improvement initiatives.” Reforming the central office, when orchestrated properly, proves highly effective throughout the district because it targets daily work practice and thus pervades the interactions of district and school leaders.

The study presents five features (or “dimensions of central office transformation”) of successfully reorganized offices in three urban school districts. These districts all experienced gains in student achievement that district leaders credited in part to the redesign of the district office. Figure 1.2 presents the dimensions as listed in the study. Although the CSTP initially explicated these five dimensions in the context of reforming a district office for the purpose of supporting teaching and learning, they are general enough to apply to other initiatives that demand cohesive district-school interaction.

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**Figure 1.2: Dimensions of Central Office Transformation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D I M E N S I O N</th>
<th>C O R E  C O N C E P T</th>
<th>K E Y  A C T I O N  S T E P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 1: Learning-focused partnerships with school principals to deepen principals’ instructional leadership practice.</td>
<td>Provide ILDs to work with principals</td>
<td>ILDs provide support for a principal’s leadership development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 2: Assistance to the central office–principal partnerships.</td>
<td>Support ILDs’ work with principals</td>
<td>ILDs are supported by professional development and resources (esp. time) to carry out tasks effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 3: Reorganizing and re-culturing of each central office unit, to support the central office–principal partnerships and teaching and learning improvement.</td>
<td>Case/project management style</td>
<td>Match administrators with small groups of schools to receive targeted attention and help to overcome obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 4: Stewardship of the overall central office transformation process.</td>
<td>Communal engagement</td>
<td>District administrators engage with others to effect change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 5: Use of evidence throughout the central office to support continual improvement of work practices and relationships with schools.</td>
<td>Evidence-based decision-making</td>
<td>Administrators consult quantitative and qualitative performance data to inform changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Honig et al.14

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13 Ibid., p. xi.
14 Ibid., p. v.
The first dimension of central office transformation captures the emphasis that the districts placed on working with principals to develop their leadership capacity. Each district employed dedicated Instructional Leadership Directors (ILDs) who provided constant support for each principal’s leadership development as schools worked to improve learning. The ILDs engaged with principals both one-on-one and in networks to help them think and act as instructional leaders in their schools. Dimension 2 goes hand in hand with these partnerships: each district provided support for the ILDs in the form of professional development and minimal workload outside the ILD-principal partnerships. This support ensured that the ILD could devote extensive and uninterrupted attention to strengthening the principal’s leadership and forging the district-school connection.15

In elaborating on dimension 3, reorganizing the district office and revitalizing its culture, the study discusses a case management approach to central office organization. This approach involves matching administrators with small groups of schools, who received dedicated, expert attention from the administrators. As with the first two dimensions, this approach focuses and strengthens the district-school connections through dedicated support.16 The CSTP researchers also advocate a project management approach to district-school interaction. Instead of focusing narrowly on his or her specified duties, a district administrator with a project management mindset helps schools to overcome obstacles to reform even if that involves addressing issues that cut across central office units. This approach contributes to successful problem-solving at the school and district levels.17

Notably, the study emphasizes that the mere redistribution of labor is insufficient for effective reform: “high performance depends not only on formal structures but also fundamentally on the practice of people.”18 Accordingly, successful districts will make operational change a priority as well. Reform of practices, particularly district-school interactions, remains essential for the support of new initiatives.

Dimension 4, founded on the concept of stewardship, requires that district administrators engage with others to effect change. Effective leaders do this by communicating the nature and purpose of the office’s reorganization to stakeholders and emphasizing the community-wide benefits. Furthermore, stewardship may involve going outside the immediate school community and partnering with local leaders to obtain resources and strategic guidance.19

Lastly, dimension 5 stresses the need for evidence as a basis for decision-making. The study authors found that successful district leaders plan and adjust reforms on the basis of data about school and student. This evidence includes not only student performance data but also the experience of principals and administrators with central office reforms. Careful

15 Ibid., vi-vii.
16 Ibid., vii-viii.
17 Ibid., pp. viii, 21.
18 Ibid., p. 2.
19 Ibid., pp. 88-89.
consideration of this evidence is reflected in the way that district leaders tailor their efforts to support schools throughout the reform process.\textsuperscript{20}

Again, across these five dimensions the themes of collaboration and shared authority emerge as the harbingers of positive transformation.

**BEST PRACTICES**

Having discussed some of the key concepts from research on district leadership, we now present some of the practices of districts that have been recognized for their organizational excellence by two educational organizations, the Broad Foundation and the School Redesign Network.

**THE BROAD PRIZE**

Each year the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, an educational philanthropy, awards a $1 million prize to an urban school district for its improvement in student achievement and success in reducing achievement gaps.\textsuperscript{21} The foundation evaluates candidate districts according to a rubric with three basic performance categories, including “Organizational Structure and Climate.”\textsuperscript{22} Within this category, three criteria deal specifically with the district’s “organizational coherence” or overall structural integrity:

- The district is well-organized to ensure vertical and horizontal system coherence.
- The district implements consistent standards-based definitions of proficiency in its student grading procedures across schools for all grade levels and content areas.
- The district effectively balances centralized and decentralized decision making.\textsuperscript{23}

These standards do not identify a single optimal structure for a school district administration; rather, they frame a set of best practices for the structuring of an effective central office. As the Broad Prize website illustrates, these best practices appear in districts with significant differences in leadership structure. Here we discuss the structures of two award-winning districts.

**Miami-Dade County Public Schools** (MDCPS), the winner of the 2012 Broad Prize, ranks among those districts identified by the Broad Foundation as a model of organizational coherence. In its description of this Florida school district’s structure, the foundation notes the following characteristics:

- All departments report directly to the superintendent.
- There are positions devoted to accountability and system-wide performance and knowledge management.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 23.
\textsuperscript{21} “Frequently Asked Question.” The Broad Prize. http://www.broadprize.org/about/FAQ.html#22
\textsuperscript{23} Bulleted points taken verbatim from: Ibid., p. 12.
- Each department’s role is described in the context of how it contributes to the district’s pursuit of the goals in the mission statement.
- The responsibilities of most central office units are defined in terms of services to schools.²⁴

The organizational chart in Figure 1.3 serves to illustrate these points. Notably, the Broad Foundation, like the CSTP and IEL, emphasizes that the central office should serve the schools. It also is noteworthy that the Broad Foundation recommends direct lines of communication between departments and the superintendent.

**Figure 1.3: District Office Organizational Chart for Miami-Dade County Public Schools**

The foundation has also recognized **Long Beach Unified School District** (LBUSD) in Long Beach, California, the 2003 Broad Prize winner, for its exemplary organizational coherence. The distinguishing features of the district include the following:

- The LBUSD organizational structure provides clearly delineates paths of authority and accountability.
- The district prioritizes instruction and support services as the two major units directly under the superintendent.
- All schools fall under the purview of the central office instructional unit.\(^{26}\)

The full LBUSD organizational chart appears in Figure 1.4 on the following page. The structure differs from MDCPS’s in a two important ways. Notably, LBUSD divides the supervision of elementary and secondary schools between two assistant superintendents while MDCPS does not, despite being the larger of the two districts. Moreover, the clear distinction between instructional and support units did not appear in the MDCPS organizational chart. These differences suggest that districts may adopt different leadership structures and still realize their missions effectively.

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Figure 1.4: District Organizational Chart, LBUSD

Source: LBUSD

**SCHOOL REDESIGN NETWORK**

LBUSD has also received attention for its use of distributive leadership (also known as “distributed leadership”) at the district level from the School Redesign Network (SRN) at Stanford University. According to SRN, distributive leadership “extends the responsibility for leadership beyond the individual and weaves it into the relationships and interactions of multiple stakeholders.” Unlike a traditional hierarchical model of leadership, a distributive approach engages individuals at all levels of an organization in the decision-making process. This approach, SRN claims, is a critical element of many successful school reform initiatives. At LBUSD distributed leadership facilitated the implementation of a Linked Learning or “multiple pathways” initiative overseen by the State of California. Using top-down and bottom-up approaches, the district developed leadership teams at multiple levels, displayed in Figure 1.5 below.

**Figure 1.5: Elements of Distributive Leadership at Different Levels in LBUSD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>THE ELEMENTS OF DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP AT LBUSD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DISTRICT LEVEL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Director for Smaller Learning Communities and Expanding Pathways.</strong> The district point person who takes primary responsibility for LBUSD’s participation in the Linked Learning Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extended Implementation Team.</strong> Academic and career technical education curriculum leaders, work-based learning coordinator, and research analyst. Works closely with the project director.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Executive Team.</strong> Members of the superintendent’s cabinet. Works with the project director to maintain alignment with high priority district initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCHOOL LEVEL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pathway Leadership Teams.</strong> School site administrators, teachers, counselors, and others. Lead the work to change their current structures, policies, and instructional practices to align with the district initiative. Connect with the central office system through the project director.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small Learning Community coordinators.</strong> Meet with district project director and a district SLC coach. Meet monthly to work on shared concerns and build ownership around the components of the initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY LEVEL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expanding Pathways Implementation Council.</strong> School curriculum leaders, postsecondary partners, ROP and CTE leaders, principals, counselors, SLC coordinators, community leaders, executive district staff, and others. Meets monthly to facilitate the implementation and expansion of the Linked Learning approach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School Redesign Network

At the district level there were three leadership contingents: a project director, an extended implementation team, and an executive team. The members of the implementation team—curriculum leaders, the worked-based learning coordinator, and a research analyst—

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29 Ibid.

30 Table text taken verbatim from: Ibid., p. 3.
provided regular input and guidance concerning the direction of the initiative. The executive team, composed of members of the superintendent’s cabinet, oversaw the alignment of the project with other district initiatives. Finally, the project director functioned as the liaison between the district and the state and the overall “point person” for the initiative.31

School leaders were actively involved in the initiative as well. Administrators, teachers, and counselors composed Pathway Leadership Teams that oversaw the implementation of the initiative “on the ground” in their respective schools. In addition, Small Learning Community Coordinators ensured that each pathway would align properly with the small learning community structure within the schools.32

Lastly, the district engaged the broader community—industry and community leaders as well as district and school officials—through the Expanding Pathways Implementation Council. This coalition met monthly to communicate with key stakeholders, recommend strategic adjustments, and benefit from the expertise of community members.33

SRN remarks that this multi-level leadership structure produced “infrastructures that foster the sustainability often lacking in reform initiatives, minimizing the impact of the inevitable migration of individual champions within the school or district.”34 Accordingly, distributed leadership structures may serve both to facilitate reform and to sustain it.

However, there also are two challenges for this model. First, the precise authority of each leadership body or role may be left unclear and reform may founder as a result. Second, there may be an imbalance between lower-level autonomy and the overarching vision within a district, so that conflict or disorder results. SRN notes that an appropriate degree of central oversight is necessary to avoid these problems.35

31 Ibid., p. 2.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., pp. 2-3.
34 Ibid., p. 4.
35 Ibid., pp. 3-4.
SECTION II: PROFILES OF DISTRICT LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES

In this section we profile the leadership structures of four district offices. Three of the following profiles examine peer districts. Using data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Public School District Finance Peer Search, we selected peers on the basis of similarity to our partner along the following dimensions:

- Enrollment – between 2,000 and 6,500 students
- Number of schools – between 4 and 11
- Locale – near an urban or town area
- Child poverty rate – under 7 percent.

All the peers profiled below received recognition from the Center for American Progress (CAP), a policy research and advocacy organization, as “highly productive” districts in 2011. Districts earned this distinction by ranking among the best districts in the state on three metrics: two measures of student achievement relative to expenditures and one measure of actual student achievement compared to predicted achievement for districts with similar expenditures and demographics. In addition, each district has undertaken some significant initiative in the past several years. Because the three peers have relatively similar leadership structures, we include a profile of a fourth, non-peer district that has been successful with a somewhat different leadership structure.

It is important to note that there is not dispositive evidence that any of the district leadership structures described below actually facilitates the management of new initiatives. Rather, the following profiles indicate only that these leadership structures are compatible with the successful implementation of district-level initiatives.

PEER PROFILES

FRANKLIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (FRANKLIN, MA)

Franklin Public Schools (FPS), in addition to winning accolades for its high productivity, has received commendation from CAP for its collaboration with the community. In 2004 the district and the Town of Franklin merged their technology departments into a single entity, which falls primarily under the oversight of the school system. The district reported that the
merger had been effective, as it strengthened the security of the technology system and facilitated professional development for school and town employees.\(^{39}\)

The district’s leadership structure, depicted in Figure 2.1, is relatively simple. A superintendent serves as the executive officer for the district and carries out the policies determined by the Franklin School Committee.\(^{40}\) A sole assistant superintendent aids the superintendent in overseeing seven cabinet officers. In turn, these officers tend to issues in the following areas: instructional services, adult/community education, finance, special learning needs, human resources, facilities, and technology.

**Figure 2.1: Organization of District Leadership in Franklin Public Schools**

![Organization Chart](http://example.com organización.png)

Source: Franklin Public Schools\(^{41}\)

**NORWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS (NORWELL, MA)**

Norwell Public Schools (NPS) earned recognition for its high productivity from CAP, who also praised the district’s comprehensive reform plan.\(^{42}\) The reform plan, adopted in 2008, has four goals:

- By 2011, at least 50% of Norwell households will participate in school-based activities and/or community education programs for life-long learning.
- By 2012, 100% of Norwell students will demonstrate the knowledge and creativity required to be academically proficient.
- By 2013, 100% of Norwell students will demonstrate an understanding of current ethical questions and the character traits needed to address them.

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\(^{40}\) “Policy Implementation.” Franklin School Committee. http://franklinschool.vts.net/Pages/FranklinCom_Emanual/c/Cdocs/CH

\(^{41}\) “Organizational Chart.” Franklin Public Schools. http://franklindistrict.vts.net/Pages/FranklinDistrict_Superintendent/orchart

By 2013, there will be a 30% increase over the 2009 rate of graduating seniors academically prepared and interested in pursuing a post-secondary course of study or career in science.43 Implementing this plan required careful collaboration among the 25 members of a strategic planning team composed of teachers, parents, students, administrators, and community leaders.44 While this plan was a system-wide effort, direction nonetheless came from the district level, and the superintendent was ultimately responsible for oversight of the initiative.45

The district leadership structure at NPS resembles the structure at Franklin Public Schools with two notable exceptions. First, there is no assistant superintendent at NPS, so all district officers report directly to the superintendent. Second, there are fewer officers at NPS, which does not have divisions dedicated to adult/continuing learning, pupil personnel services, or human resources. Notably, NPS divides the cabinet officers into two broad functional categories, instruction and operations. This division replicates on a much smaller scale the structure seen in Long Beach Unified School District and commended by the Broad Foundation.

Figure 2.2: District Leadership Structure at Norwell Public Schools

Source: NPS46

**WAVERLY-SHELL ROCK COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (WAVERLY/SHELL ROCK, IA)**

Waverly-Shell Rock Community Schools (WSRCS) earned a mention in CAP’s report for its support for new professional learning communities as well as its high productivity. The district recently has developed these communities in order to foster student learning and facilitate the development of curricula.47 Because the initiative involved a significant

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44 Ibid., p. 2.
46 “Superintendent’s Welcome.” NPS. http://norwellschools.org/Page/6
The revision of the weekly school schedule to allow for teacher collaboration, communication with key stakeholders (particularly parents) was a critical component of the district’s implementation strategy.48

According to the policies of the district’s School Board, the district administration consists of a superintendent, a business manager, and the Director of Educational Services (elsewhere listed as the Director of Curriculum).49 This arrangement is depicted in Figure 2.3. While the school’s website also lists directors for transportation/maintenance and food services, these positions do not appear to be considered part of the district administration.50, 51 Although the basic leadership structure at WSRCS resembles the structures in the preceding peer profiles, it is notable for its employment of only two officers below the superintendent.

Figure 2.3: District Leadership Structure at Waverly-Shell Rock Community Schools

Source: WSRCS

NON-PEER PROFILE: MSD WARREN TOWNSHIP (INDIANAPOLIS, IN)

Although the Metropolitan School District of Warren Township (MSD Warren Township) differs from the our partner in several important respects, it deserves a mention in light of some its leadership structures and its recent success in obtaining a $28.6 million Race to the Top-District grant from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Notably, ED required that recipients of the grants have demonstrated prior success in reform and improvement efforts.52

The district, which serves approximately 11,500 students in 17 schools,53 has a leadership structure similar to our partner in many respects. As Figure 2.4 shows, the central office administration consists of a superintendent and seven additional officers, including four

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48 “Frequently Asked Questions; Professional Learning Communities.” WSRCS. http://www.waverly-shellrock.k12.ia.us/PlcFAQ.pdf
50 “Maintenance Staff Directory.” WSRCS. http://www.waverly-shellrock.k12.ia.us/New_District/staff_maint.html
51 “Food Service Staff.” WSRCS. http://www.waverly-shellrock.k12.ia.us/New_District/staff_food.html
assistant superintendents. These officers deal with aspects of district management typically delegated to cabinet officers, such as technology and human resources. However, MSD-Wayne Township differs from our partner district in dividing the oversight of individual schools between two assistant superintendents: one for pre-kindergarten to 6th grade, and one for 7th grade to adult. This division may be the result of the particularly active roles that these two officers play in district administration; the district notes that they are in the schools on a daily basis. MSD-Warren Township also observes that it employs fewer district office staff for an urban district of its size, for it prefers to dedicate resources to the schools. MSD-Warren Township also differs from our partner in designating four positions for assistant superintendents, suggesting that the district may devote more extensive resources to the areas overseen by these officers.

Figure 2.4: District Leadership Structure of MSD-Warren Township

Source: MSD-Warren Township

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Project Evaluation Form

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Caveat

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