Theme A: Increased Teacher Collaboration and Collective Inquiry

More than one-half of grant schools indicated through their review of PLC tenets that the TLD grant has provided the time and resources necessary for teachers and administrators to collaborate on the development of higher order thinking skills, common assessments, intervention and enrichment curriculum, and identifying goals through department and content teams, focus groups, and staff meetings.

Theme B: Increased Use of Research-Based Practices

More than 40 percent of grant schools indicated through their PLC tenets an increased use of research-based best practices for specific populations (e.g. special education and at-risk students), specific areas of instruction (e.g. reading), and general strategies. Schools are sharing best practices with staff through in-service training, presentations, and closed circuit broadcasts.

Theme C: Increased Teacher Leadership and Decision-Making

Almost 60 percent of the grant schools selected tenets most directly identified with teacher leadership (teacher collaboration, principals as leaders of teacher leaders, and persistence in a non-linear process) as those most impacted by the grant. All schools reported how “the pursuit of their objectives promoted building capacity for teacher leadership,” indicating that teachers increased leadership and decision-making activities by: participating in staff development focused on effective leadership skills; conducting presentations outside the school and turnaround training within the school; assuming formal leadership positions; representing their grade level in vertical team meetings; and participating in the school’s decision-making processes, including development of school improvement plans.

Theme D: Increased Use of Data to Drive Instruction

All schools indicated that the TLD grant has provided the time and resources necessary for teachers and administrators to use data to drive instruction as evidenced by their descriptions of: common assessments, sharing student data, including test results as part of curriculum discussion, administering early (pre-fall) assessments, monitoring progress, increasing the use of technologies, and providing staff development on use of data.

Theme E: Increased Academic Achievement

All grants identified an increase in student achievement as the long-term measure for many of their grant objectives. Specifically, they identified three primary methods for reaching these objectives:

- Providing support for skill development and instructional strategies based on best practices.
- Providing support for common assessments that determine instructional needs and guide interventions.
- Providing support for professional training and regular meeting time for teachers that is focused on student achievement.

Theme F: Increase of Appropriate Professional Development and Training

Over 40 percent of grant schools indicated through their PLC tenets that they had increased the variety of workshops, embedded professional development, study groups, and conferences in order to enhance instructional strategies.

Theme G: Increased Parent Involvement

Over 40 percent of grant schools indicated through their PLC tenets that they had implemented projects to increase parent involvement through monthly family gatherings, neighborhood bus trips, volunteer opportunities, emphasis on in-home strategies, an awareness of teacher leadership grant activities and participation in parent surveys that provide input and feedback to the school.