

Advanced Leadership in Schools introduced Cohort 11 members to the nuances and complexities associated with the New York State Regents Reform Agenda and the Race to the Top (RTTT) initiatives. In 2011, as a result of New York State's acceptance of Race to the Top (RTTT) federal funds, a new evaluation system was created for both teachers and principals. These annual professional performance review (APPR) procedures have for the first time tied student achievement data to teacher and principal performance. For principals, many districts have begun to implement the Learner-Centered Initiatives, Multidimensional Principal Performance Rubric (MPPR). The purpose of the evaluation system is to ensure that there is an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school. Each of these evaluation systems is embedded in one of two competing views of the organizational nature of schools: as a formal organization of employees or as a community of scholars.

Dr. Smith asked us to think about the various types of performance tools and how each was evaluating the aims and goals of the standards included in the Common Core. At the onset of the course, we examined the work of Hoyle and Pfeffer and then closely read a set of sources to construct a conceptual framework for the analysis of the MPPR. The sources of leadership theory included Stanford University's panel of current leaders, the Cremin and Dewey perspective, Smith's ADC Model, Bryk's study of relational trust in Chicago, Sergiovanni's construct for moral leadership, Stone's model for civic capacity, and a study of the DNA of leadership in Toyota. We conducted qualitative research by analyzing the aforementioned perspectives of leadership theory. As researchers, we set out to discover the direction of the state's RTTT policy in regards to an analysis of the literature on school leadership.

The final project, a five chapter research paper, examined and presented procedures used in order to answer the research question: What are the predominant perspectives on leadership, based in leadership theory, that are embedded in the MPPR? Information was collected through a variety of sources to obtain data on the models of effective leadership embedded in the MPPR. The professional readings were analyzed by engaging in thematic/content analyses via close reading as a means to capture the perspective on authority represented in the seven sources.

Dr. Smith implemented Moodle to post our individual and group assignments. As members of the Cohort responded to the tasks presented by Dr. Smith, we would also read and critique the responses of our colleagues. Throughout the coursework, we examined conceptual frameworks and how we apply them to research on leadership.

EDU 5571 was an extremely beneficial, as well as practical, course. The information shared and presented by Dr. Smith was timely and relevant to the issues that as a 21st century educational leaders, we are able to utilize.