

Title of the Submission: Unpacking District Roles and Responsibilities in Standards-based Reform

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Abstract of the Paper:

Standards-based reform, with its consistent focus on state-level policy and school-level accountability, may seem to ignore or at least devalue the role of the district level in implementation of such reform efforts. As well, studies and review examining the implementation of standards-based or curriculum reform have tended to focus almost exclusively on the policy, school, or classroom level. Yet, there is accumulating evidence that school need all the assistance they can get in successfully implementing standards-based reform. The district level seems the most likely source for this assistance. This study examined and developed an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of districts in assisting schools in implementing state learning standards. The study concludes that: (1) at the district level, the beliefs, understandings, and knowledge of individual administrators interacts with the context to influence how and to what degree the district becomes involved, (2) to move beyond minimal compliance an organizational learning process must be evident and systemic, and (3) district involvement in standards implementation is critical to overall efforts.