Leading from the Front of the Classroom

A Roadmap to Teacher Leadership that Works

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Our educators are under duress. Principals have to conduct more teacher evaluations than ever before—a process that yields valuable information but requires an unprecedented amount of time. They have to figure out how to help their teachers bring an entirely new set of standards to life in the classroom and chip away at a stubbornly persistent achievement gap. And they face a constant struggle to keep top teachers from leaving in the face of all these pressures.

It has become clear that this burden is too much for administrators to tackle on their own.[1] If schools are to be successful at preparing all students for a rapidly changing world, they must distribute leadership more broadly. By developing leadership roles and skills for teachers, schools and school systems can make it easier for principals, teachers, and, above all, students to succeed.[2]

Through new roles and responsibilities, highly effective teachers can collaborate with and influence their colleagues and principals in order to shift school culture and advance teaching, learning, and student achievement.[3] Teacher leadership can also be part of a career ladder that rewards top performers, improves the chances of retaining them, and supports the recruitment of others like them.[4] Additionally, teacher leaders can sometimes influence practices throughout the system and state so that policies are more likely to benefit students.[5]

In this paper, Leading Educators and the Aspen Institute propose a roadmap to empower teachers to lead from the front of the classroom. This paper outlines key phases that system administrators will need to consider as they build teacher leadership systems that address their highest priorities. For each phase, we offer a narrative description, high-impact action steps, common missteps, and discussion questions for further exploration.

To clarify how system leaders can apply this paper, we examine the opportunities for teacher leadership as well as its challenges, and we analyze trends from organizations that have been working to implement effective teacher leadership.

We highlight current innovations, from emerging pilots to mature programs. These profiles—which include initiatives at the school, district, charter management organization, and state levels— focus on teacher leadership as a means for improving instructional capacity, school structure, and student culture. The approaches vary: an urban school district built a career ladder to facilitate professional growth and retention; a charter network uses teacher leadership to create and sustain aspirational student and staff cultures; a state education agency relies on teacher leaders to improve implementation of the Common Core State Standards. What these efforts share is an underlying conviction that we need to leverage the talents of our best teachers, for everyone's sake.

Teacher Leadership that Works: Matching Form with Function

Effective teacher leadership marries **form with function** in order to create transformative change in schools. By function, we mean that the teacher leadership initiatives are not created for their own sake but are designed to advance other pressing priorities. By form, we mean that the teacher leader roles are clearly defined, with sufficient time, support, and resources to be effective. The chart below summarizes what teacher leadership looks like when form and function are aligned and what it looks like when they are not.

FORM WITHOUT FUNCTION	FORM WITH FUNCTION
Clearly defined teacher leadership roles that are mostly bureaucratic or administrative in nature ➜ Limited benefits for teacher leaders, students, or schools	Clearly defined and adequately supported teacher leadership roles linked to the key priorities of a system ➜ Transformative and sustained change
NEITHER FORM NOR FUNCTION	**FUNCTION WITHOUT FORM**
Lack of teacher leadership initiatives ➜ Schools struggle to meet increasing demands	Teacher leaders take on critical responsibilities without adequate support or systematic clarity ➜ Increased burnout, missed development opportunities

Without deliberate upfront planning, systems can implement teacher leadership with form but not function. In these instances, administrators may create roles out of a desire to reward experienced teachers with career pathways and formal recognition, but the roles do not otherwise advance a school's or system's most pressing priorities. As a result, these teacher leadership initiatives are likely to struggle for relevance and sustained resources and are unlikely to contribute to transformative change.

Similarly, a system may create teacher leadership roles with function but without form. In these instances, teachers may take on additional, crucial responsibilities, but the roles are not defined well, and the teachers are not provided enough support or training. This misses the opportunity to develop teachers systematically and sustainably and may lead to increased frustration and turnover among teacher leaders. Only when teacher leadership roles combine form and function will systems be able to drive sustained, transformational change.

As systems align the form and function of teacher leadership, they may need to jettison their old teacher leader roles and responsibilities in favor of new ones. The chart below provides an example of this shift.

	OLD TEACHER LEADERSHIP	NEW TEACHER LEADERSHIP
ROLE	• Teacher takes on responsibilities for administrative tasks (e.g., the ordering and distribution of supplies) or events outside of the classroom (e.g., family night or field trips).	• Teacher observes and coaches other teachers, models best practices, and leads team meetings.
AUTHORITY	• District administrator or principal sets meeting agendas. • Teacher rarely participates in formally evaluating or coaching other teachers.	• Teacher sets meeting agendas. • Teacher may participate in formally evaluating or hiring other teachers.
TIME AND COMPENSATION	• Teacher lacks time to observe and work with colleagues on their instructional practice. • Teacher may or may not receive additional compensation.	• Teacher receives release time and training to observe and work with colleagues on their instructional practice. • Teacher receives additional compensation in exchange for increased responsibility and authority.
SELECTION AND TRAINING	• Selection is based on seniority or personal relationships. • Limited professional development on leadership.	• Selection and training are based on competencies aligned to leadership role. • Significant professional development on leadership.
FORM AND FUNCTION	• Teacher has no defined role relating to giving other teachers feedback or helping them improve.	• Teacher has specific duties that drive key system-wide goals (e.g., improving instructional quality, building aspirational student and staff cultures).

The shift to meaningful and effective teacher leadership will not be easy. Absent a systemic, comprehensive approach, teacher leadership initiatives have in the past benefitted individual teacher leaders without having much impact on student or team performance.[6]

The challenge, then, is to identify and cultivate the conditions under which teacher leadership can be most effective for both individuals and the system as whole. What roles and implementation strategies have the greatest potential? What common missteps might be avoided? And how can systems navigate the obstacles that appear to stand in the way of effective teacher leadership?

A Roadmap for Teacher Leadership that Works

To build teacher leadership that works, system administrators need to clarify the purpose of teacher leadership—what we call **designing for impact**. Concurrently, we advise leaders to **know their context** in order to address potential challenges and opportunities. To ensure deliberate, strategic leadership development, systems must then **define the measures** before implementation begins and monitor progress throughout implementation. Finally, systems need to **build strategically** by designing clear teacher leader roles and responsibilities. This includes effective selection and training processes for teacher leaders as well as strategies for supporting principals and principal managers throughout the process of changing roles and responsibilities. By deciding the purpose of the initiative and the measures for its success before implementation, leaders engage in a backwards design process that will enhance the alignment and success of their teacher leadership work.

Design for Impact

HIGH-IMPACT ACTIONS	KEY QUESTIONS
Examine key priorities and identify a purpose for teacher leadership that aligns with one of those priorities.	What priorities can be advanced through teacher leadership? Where and how could teacher leadership best advance this priority?
Engage stakeholders with the most knowledge of—and whose work is most affected by—that chosen priority.	Does the proposed teacher leadership initiative do more than provide a career pathway for top teachers?
Secure commitments from members of the cabinet or leadership team to prioritize teacher leadership as a means of addressing this objective.	

COMMON MISSTEPS
Embracing teacher leadership strictly as a means of recognizing top teachers
"Protecting" teacher leaders from responsibility for broader system priorities
Designing a teacher leadership team with a very small team of insiders

While teachers are responsible for their classrooms and principals for their schools, the responsibilities of teacher leaders are often less clearly defined. Their work may overlap with other spheres of influence and can be ambiguous. Those designing a teacher leadership system must define the goals of the initiative clearly and engage staff and stakeholders in its development so that it helps a school district make progress on its most pressing priorities.

Tennessee provides an instructive example. In 2012, the Tennessee Department of Education recruited and trained 200 highly effective teachers in implementing the Common Core standards, and those teacher leaders in turn taught 13,000 others. These "Core Coaches" then served as resources for their schools, districts, and regions during the school year. In 2013, Tennessee expanded the program to include 700 Core Coaches who trained more than 30,000 teachers—nearly half of all teachers in the state.

Tennessee's design process began during the 2011-12 school year, when state officials identified Common Core implementation as an opportunity to meet their college and career readiness goals. With the state's 4th graders ranking in the bottom fifth nationally in reading and math, and with 85 percent of its high school seniors unprepared for college, officials viewed the new, more rigorous standards as a tool for boosting Tennessee's academic and economic competitiveness.[7]

In consultation with its Common Core Leadership Council, an advisory body comprised of system-level administrators, the state Department of Education decided that teacher leadership could be a key lever for creating change. In particular, council members stressed that Common Core implementation needed to be a bottom-up rather than a top-down process, with teachers assuming a leadership role. That approach resonated with the department, which had faced criticism that it acted too quickly and unilaterally during an earlier implementation of teacher evaluations. Significantly, key department officials embraced teacher leadership as a means of addressing the shift to the Common Core.

State officials also recognized that teacher leadership provided an opportunity to make an impact that extended beyond the Common Core rollout. By empowering a select group of Core Coaches, the department sought to increase its teacher corps' overall investment in the standards, build a statewide pool of teacher leaders and instructional coaches, and improve teachers' instructional practice at scale.

Iowa also leveraged teacher leadership to address a top priority. The state's Teacher Leadership and Compensation System, a legislatively mandated initiative that includes a teacher career pathway and differentiated leadership roles, aims to promote collaboration, reward professional growth and effective teaching, and attract and retain effective teachers in order to strengthen instruction and improve student achievement.[8] Similarly, at the district level, Denver Public Schools developed a theory of action for its teacher leadership initiatives that emphasized academics: "If we create shared leadership structures in schools, where school leaders work with empowered teacher leaders, we can build better opportunities for feedback and growth, retaining effective teachers, and driving increased student achievement."[9]

High-performing charter schools have made that commitment as well. Both TEAM Schools, a KIPP Region in New Jersey, and the Noble Network of Charter Schools in Chicago have achieved high academic gains through a rigorous, no-excuses culture. Recognizing that a single principal could not monitor every detail as carefully as is required, these organizations have teacher leaders oversee the evolution of their student and staff cultures through planning, training, and monitoring—in general, vigilantly guarding a school environment of high expectations.

Know Your Context

HIGH-IMPACT ACTIONS	KEY QUESTIONS
Gauge the system's current level of trust, collaboration, and distributed leadership.	Does the district have sufficiently rigorous systems to accurately identify top teachers?
Engage stakeholders broadly at many different levels—particularly teachers, unions, principals, principal managers, and other district staff.	In what areas is collaboration already taking place? In what ways can teacher leadership bolster trust, and where will lack of trust be a barrier to implementation?
Assess the level of technical expertise available internally and externally to implement the desired teacher leadership initiatives.	How can systems create genuine engagement and ownership as they expand their teacher leadership work without reopening the entire design process?
Ensure that there are information systems that generate data on teacher effectiveness.	What initiatives or structures can be replaced in order to create financially sustainable teacher leadership?
Examine potential funding sources, including within the current budget.	

COMMON MISSTEPS
Engaging stakeholders after the design of teacher leader roles and expecting them to understand and embrace the initiative
Replicating roles from other systems or contexts and assuming they will transfer coherently
Assuming trust and strong working relationships exist across central office departments (e.g., principal supervision, curriculum and instruction, and human resources) and failing to proactively manage and monitor collaboration

Schools and systems that prioritize teacher leadership can—and should—build upon their existing resources, while also thinking strategically about the additional resources that are needed. For example, because teacher leaders should be highly effective themselves, schools and districts must be able to accurately gauge effectiveness before building teacher leadership programs.[10]

D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) knew this and developed a teacher evaluation system and a career ladder *before* introducing innovative teacher leadership roles. Last year, DCPS began a Teacher Leadership Innovation (TLI) pilot that sought to create new teacher leader roles to leverage the strengths of their most effective teachers. These teacher leaders have the opportunity to design innovative, school-specific roles with their principals. This followed efforts to improve teacher evaluation and the creation of a five-stage career ladder to provide high-performing teachers with increased recognition and compensation. By first establishing systems for identifying and rewarding their top teachers, DCPS was well positioned to build new leadership opportunities for their top teachers.

Another resource that teacher leadership initiatives should build upon is a system's cultural capital. Researchers have identified collaboration and cooperation among faculty as keys for the successful implementation of teacher leadership—and some schools have established that better than others. The Differentiated Roles pilot program at Denver Public Schools (DPS) provides an example of a system building upon an existing culture of collaboration. That initiative involves Teacher Team Leads spending between one-quarter to one-half of their time outside of their own classrooms to observe,

coach, and manage teams of fellow teachers. Like DCPS, DPS already had a teacher effectiveness system in place before pursuing its teacher leadership pilot. The district had also developed its framework through a gradual process in which principals, teachers, unions, and a variety of central office administrators had many opportunities to provide input.

Additionally, DPS administrators worked closely with schools on their applications to participate in the pilot, so they could identify those that were best suited for the program and permit schools to tailor their Team Lead roles to their specific challenges and strengths. The district's process underscores the need to establish and leverage trust along multiple dimensions—within the central office, between schools and the central office, and within schools themselves. As teacher leadership initiatives mature, systems will also need to consider how to create genuine engagement and ownership across these dimensions without opening up the entire design process again.

Teacher leadership programs also require a certain level of technical capacity for leadership development and ongoing support, which can be found internally or externally. In the short term, systems may need to partner with outside organizations, such as Public Impact, TeachPlus, and Leading Educators, to increase their technical expertise in leadership development.

By knowing their context, systems will be able to adjust the design of their teacher leadership initiatives to address potential challenges and opportunities—in other words, to ensure that form matches function. While systems' resources may be limited in some of the areas above, we believe that those systems that strategically exploit their existing strengths can lay a solid foundation for success.

Funding Teacher Leadership

Committing to teacher leadership initiatives means committing to the resources they require. Grants like the federal Teacher Incentive Fund program can be helpful catalysts for launching teacher leadership work, but districts also need to plan for sustaining the program. For instance, Denver costs include a $5,000 stipend for Team Leads and coverage for their classrooms when they are not teaching. The district is initially covering these costs through a five-year, $28 million TIF grant, but starting in the second year of implementation, DPS general funds will be supporting a third of the schools in the pilot.

Define the Measures

HIGH-IMPACT ACTIONS	KEY QUESTIONS
Build broad understanding of long-term and leading indicators for the initiative.	How will the district measure success in the short- and long-term?
Identify systems and mechanisms for collecting data on short- and long-term measures.	What systems will be necessary in order to accurately assess the impact of teacher leadership?
Determine processes for accounting for teacher leadership within, and incorporating it into, existing teacher and principal evaluation frameworks.	Should new principal evaluations assess distributed leadership to reinforce this priority—particularly in schools with teacher leadership initiatives?
	Should teacher leaders receive a "hold harmless" period on their own performance evaluations as they transition to their new roles?
	What types of high-stakes evaluations can—or should—be tied to teacher leadership positions?

COMMON MISSTEPS
Targets are not established before implementation, making it difficult to create and share a vision for determining success.
Methods for evaluation are time-intensive and burdensome on teacher leaders.
In systems where trust and collaboration are limited, pushing for rigid accountability during initial implementation can limit effectiveness by encouraging compliance rather than innovation and learning.

Before implementation of teacher leadership initiatives, districts need to define success and determine how they will measure it, both in the interim and long-term. This step is critical to ensuring that the *form* of the system's teacher leadership fits its *function*.

While the research on teacher leadership's impact upon student achievement is not as developed as the research on the impacts of individual teachers or principals, encouraging evidence is beginning to emerge. In the United Kingdom, researchers found that teacher leadership can reduce gaps in student and teacher performance within schools. Other researchers have stressed teacher leadership's capacity to affect measures that can in turn promote higher levels of student achievement, particularly school culture, teachers' instructional effectiveness, schools' capacity to change, and teachers' commitment to the profession. Any of these areas could be potential long-term measures of teacher leadership, provided they align with a system's identified *function* for its teacher leadership initiative.

In the short term, systems can establish leading indicators for measuring the initiative's success. For example, systems could assess the extent to which programs are implemented with fidelity by utilizing surveys and time use studies with principals, teacher leaders, and those they lead. Since the effectiveness and satisfaction of teacher leaders are particularly dependent upon principal support, systems should be prepared to evaluate this level of support. Potential indicators include principals publicly supporting teacher leaders, clarifying their teacher leaders' roles, facilitating release time from teaching or other responsibilities, and providing consistent feedback and guidance.

When assessing implementation, systems should be careful to distinguish between inputs, such as the qualifications of its teacher leaders and the training they receive; outputs, such as the amount of time teacher leaders devote to tasks such as observing and providing feedback; and outcomes, such as shifts in school culture, evidence of trust and collaboration within faculties, and confidence in the Common Core State Standards.

Fortunately, systems can take advantage of new tools for assessing the intermediate impacts of teacher leaders. Time studies, for instance, permit systems to assess whether teacher leaders are focusing on more valuable instructional tasks as opposed to administrative tasks. Several researchers have also used staff surveys and focus groups to measure teacher motivation and organizational health. Likewise, student surveys can measure school climate as well as instructional skillfulness. Finally, teacher leaders can contribute to existing teacher evaluation processes where they can demonstrate their impact through increased teacher effectiveness, the increased frequency and improved quality of feedback, and teachers' increased confidence in the evaluation process.

DPS also tracks other immediate outcomes, such as staff culture, through existing district surveys. In order to gauge the extent to which school leaders engage their teachers, the district created Teacher Perception Surveys. Additionally, DPS implemented a district-wide CollaboRATE Survey to assess the extent to which employees feel the district is aligned to its stated values. With the addition of teacher leadership, DPS predicts scores on these surveys will increase more in schools with Team Leads, as teachers are given more voice and leadership is more distributed. Denver is also tracking the number of observation and feedback sessions, predicting that with increased teacher leadership, the frequency of feedback will increase along with the rate of improvement on LEAP, the district's teacher evaluation system. Other short-term measures include student culture surveys and interim assessment data.

In early analytics, DPS has found that teachers in Team Lead positions and the teachers on their teams both had higher scores on the Student Perception Survey than predicted. In the long term, DPS hopes to see shifts in the role principals play, along with higher retention rates for the best teachers, longer principal tenures, and, ultimately, increased student achievement.

In addition to defining success and determining how to monitor it, systems may need to adjust their existing performance evaluation frameworks to account for teacher leadership. In particular, they will need to determine whether principal evaluations should assess distributed leadership, particularly in schools where teacher leadership is a critical strategy. They will also need to decide how and whether teacher leaders' evaluations will assess their performance as leaders and whether novice teacher leaders should receive a "hold harmless" period on their own classroom-based performance evaluations as they adjust to their new roles.

Build Strategically

HIGH-IMPACT ACTIONS	KEY QUESTIONS
Support principals and principal managers as they manage teacher leaders.	Where will the district be "tight" with implementation and where will it be "loose"?
Design the role to match the current levels of trust, collaboration, and distributed leadership.	What will the district implement internally and where will the district partner with other organizations?
Obtain access to technical expertise on teacher leadership, whether internally or through a partner.	What features of the teacher leader roles will be decided at the system level, and what will be decided at the school level? How much flexibility will there be in the new teacher leader roles?
Dedicate funding to training, release time, and/or compensation for increased responsibilities.	What are the modest forms of teacher leadership that could work in low-trust environments and help build trust for more ambitious initiatives?
Select teacher leaders for instructional expertise and capacity to lead other adults.	What will teacher leaders be selected for, and what will they be trained for?
Train teacher leaders for the demands of their new roles.	How will teachers, teacher leaders, principals, and principal managers be supported in the ongoing change process?
	Which cross-functional teams will have to coordinate and drive efforts for teacher leadership initiatives to succeed?
	What are the mechanisms and protections for teacher leaders to return to secure non-leadership teaching positions if necessary or desirable?

COMMON MISSTEPS
Creating rigid roles that may not meet the needs of all school contexts
Creating vague roles that are not supported and utilized effectively
Failing to acknowledge the training and coaching—and encouragement—that principals need
Failing to allocate appropriate time for teachers to fulfill their leadership roles

As systems build new teacher leader roles, they will have to carefully consider where the requirements will be "tight" and where they will be "loose." In particular, they will need to consider what will be decided at a system or school level. Even in "loose" implementation models, systems should provide concrete models and options to help school leaders conceptualize new teacher leader roles. Without clear images of new roles, administrators and teachers may default to traditional teacher leader roles that will not have a transformative impact.

Both research and practice indicate that teacher leadership initiatives are most likely to succeed when administrators take deliberate steps in designing rich leadership roles, selecting promising candidates, developing their leadership capacity, and supporting them and their principals as they face the challenges of reform and distributed leadership.

In particular, research emphasizes the need to clearly define teacher leaders' roles, closely align their responsibilities with the instructional process, and provide them with time and rewards for their leadership duties.[11] School leaders will need to thoughtfully assess the time required for leadership responsibilities, including classroom release time, which may require some creative scheduling. This is a challenge that systems can bring in expertise—internal or external—to address.

Systems should work closely with principals in implementing teacher leadership efforts to ensure that goals and priorities align with those of the school. Principals themselves may need new training to adapt to the challenges of managing middle leaders. These challenges include creating and clarifying new performance management systems, investing staff in the new roles, and coaching new leaders. Perhaps most challenging, principals have to re-envision their own role in empowering others to lead. In DCPS, for instance, the district provides coaching support to principals in its Teacher Leadership Innovation (TLI) pilot to make sure school leaders understand and are ready for the shift to distributed leadership.

Systems also need to ensure that the form of the teacher leader roles matches their function. As mentioned earlier, these roles cannot simply be titular or administrative, but must carry actual authority, draw upon the teacher leaders' instructional expertise, and provide them with an opportunity to influence their colleagues' work. For example, teacher leaders may lead trainings; model instructional practice; observe and provide feedback to other teachers; assess and inform school-, district-, or state-level policy; develop assessments; and even manage and evaluate other teachers. System leaders should also build enough flexibility into the program to permit schools to adapt the roles to meet their specific needs.

After defining clear and robust teacher leadership roles, schools and systems need to develop processes for selecting and training leaders and create structures for supporting the principals who are working with teacher leaders. Research indicates that systems and schools should select teacher leaders who have demonstrated excellent teaching skills and content knowledge, are interested in adult learning, and are at a career and life stage that allows them to aid others and take on a leadership role. Additionally, promising teacher leaders should demonstrate strong interpersonal and collaborative skills; the capacity to make data-based assessments; and the ability to reflect upon their practice, build confidence and skills in others, and access and apply resources toward a common goal.[12]

In terms of preparation, researchers have concluded that both prospective teacher leaders and their principals need formal and job-embedded training on topics such as advanced curricular, instructional, and assessment practices; school culture and organizational change; working with adult learners; relationship management; and understanding and navigating their system's internal politics.[13]

Training programs should foster learning communities that focus on the continual development and demonstration of highly effective curricular, instructional, and assessment practices; school culture and the mechanisms for igniting and sustaining school-level reform; and the skills that are required to support adult learning, development, and group facilitation.[14] Following the 70/20/10 principle articulated by the Center for Creative Leadership, teacher leaders will need a combination of

challenging new work responsibilities (70 percent), supportive coaching relationships (20 percent), and targeted training on new responsibilities (10 percent). Significantly, training for teacher leaders cannot re-create dysfunctional, passive forms of professional development in which teachers are not active participants in the learning process.

In schools where there is limited trust and collaboration, the introduction of modest, non-evaluative teacher leader roles may build trust and foster the conditions to support more ambitious teacher leadership initiatives in the future. Finally, systems also need to create mechanisms and protections for teacher leaders to return to secure non-leadership teaching positions if their leadership roles do not work out.

Conclusion

Teacher leadership holds tremendous promise for enhancing instructional capacity, strengthening adult and student culture, and increasing the capacity of teams across a school. In addition, teacher leadership can also increase investment and trust, empower teachers as front-line leaders, and elevate the status of the teaching profession by creating a true career progression. But many challenges prevent school systems from fully leveraging the impact of teacher leadership. Primary among these is the need to carefully align the form and function of teacher leadership with a system's highest priorities. Teacher leadership lies in between traditional conceptions of teaching and administrative responsibilities. Thus, successful implementation of teacher leadership depends on careful planning and alignment across teams and initiatives.

If implemented effectively, teacher leadership can contribute significantly to achieving short-term progress and sparking additional, enduring innovation. Current teacher leadership initiatives build trust and increase schools' and systems' comfort with and capacity for distributed leadership. This in turn enables further innovation in the future. In that sense, our roadmap represents a potentially virtuous cycle with broader implications for how education leaders leverage teacher leadership over the long term to create school structures that meet the needs of all children.

In three additional papers, we further explore the implementation opportunities and challenges of innovative teacher leader roles, providing deeper context for the work of Denver Public Schools, the Tennessee Department of Education, and the Noble Network as leaders design for impact, survey the landscape, define the measures, and build strategically. These examples offer valuable lessons on the way forward as systems travel the path from investing in teacher leadership to increasing student achievement. This and the other three papers can be downloaded at www.aspendrl.org.

Appendix A

TEACHER LEADERSHIP SOUNDS VALUABLE, BUT…	POTENTIAL RESPONSES
How will I get my union on board?	Welcome the union as a partner in the teacher leadership design process. Highlight the impacts of effective teacher leadership development that speak to the union's interests. These include: • Retention of their members • Teacher empowerment in the form of greater voice and leadership • A more clearly defined career ladder
How will I increase principal skill and will to implement this change?	Train principals in distributed leadership, including the skills of influencing, motivating, and leading other adults. Pay for principals to visit systems where teacher leadership is working. Focus on making the job of principal more sustainable by building leadership capacity and shared ownership within schools.
How will I fund teacher leadership?	Repurpose Title I and Title II professional development dollars, which are often allocated to ineffective episodic professional development. Review external professional development contracts to determine what could be handled internally by teacher leaders. Pursue one of the 13 federal grant opportunities for teacher leadership, including the SEED and Teacher Incentive Fund grants.
How will I align and invest different system functions (e.g. human resources, teaching and learning, leadership development)?	Feature teacher leadership as a key strategy (as opposed to a key goal) in superintendent-led strategic plans. Ask department heads to outline where teacher leadership development could help them meet their goals.
How will I know who should be a teacher leader?	Identify teachers who take initiative, produce results, relate well to other adults, create systems, and are detail-oriented. Examine resources from organizations such as Public Impact, the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, and Leading Educators, which outline the competencies of high-functioning teacher leader candidates.
How will I tackle this when my system is already suffering from initiative burnout?	Do not frame teacher leadership as an initiative; frame it as a long-term approach to teacher career development. Emphasize that teacher leadership should actually reduce burnout by distributing responsibilities more broadly and by building the skills among your teachers and principals to effectively implement initiatives.

Appendix B

DESIGN FOR IMPACT

Assess top priorities and clarify a function for teacher leadership that aligns with those priorities. High-impact teacher leadership functions include:

- Elevating teachers' instructional skills

- Strengthening student and adult culture

- Increasing teacher feedback and development

As a secondary benefit, functional teacher leadership provides a career pathway for teachers to enhance recruitment, retention, and promotion.

KNOW YOUR CONTEXT

- Ensure there are systems for gathering data on teacher effectiveness to identify a potential pool of teacher leaders

- Assess the current level of trust and collaboration and consider whether and in what ways teacher leadership can be effective

- Identify potential funding sources to support teacher leadership

- Obtain access to technical expertise on teacher leadership, internally or through a partner

DEFINE THE MEASURES

Decide on long-term, multi-year measures of success. These could include existing measures such as student achievement or teacher effectiveness data or new measures such as the differential retention rate of top teachers compared with others.

In the short term, choose leading indicators that align to the initiative's theory of action. Leading indicators could include:

- Shifts in student or staff perception

- Interim student assessment data

- Frequency of observation and feedback conducted by teacher leaders

- Specific changes in teacher or administrator practice

Use leading indicators to guide resource allocation decisions and program modifications.

BUILD STRATEGICALLY

- Define or redefine teacher leader roles with robust responsibilities

- Select teacher leaders for instructional expertise and capacity to lead other adults

- Select schools based on readiness, culture, and eagerness

- Train teacher leaders for the demands of their new roles

- Consider and address related school design issues (e.g., scheduling, resource allocation)

- Support principals in aligning teacher leadership with school priorities and managing change

Teacher Leadership that Works

Appendix C – Additional Resources

Finding a New Way: Leveraging Teacher Leadership to Meet Unprecedented Demands, Rachel Curtis, The Aspen Institute (2013) (www.aspendrl.org)

Federal grant opportunities (SEED, Teacher Incentive Fund)

Harvard Graduate School of Education Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, *A User's Guide to Peer Assistance and Review* (http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ngt/par/)

> *A joint union-district initiative that integrates teacher support and evaluation*

Iowa Department of Education's Teacher Leadership and Compensation System (https://www.educateiowa.gov/teacher-leadership-and-compensation-system)

> *A legislatively created initiative to reward effective teachers with leadership opportunities and higher compensation*

Leading Educators (www.leadingeducators.org)

Public Impact, *An Opportunity Culture for All: Making Teaching A Highly Paid, High-Impact Profession* (http://www.opportunityculture.org/an-opportunity-culture-for-all/)

> *A proposal to extend the impact of excellent teachers through on-the-job leadership*

Teacher Leader Model Standards, http://www.teacherleaderstandards.org/index.php

TeachPlus Turnaround Teacher Teams (T3) Initiative (www.teachplus.org)

> *A teacher-designed initiative that places teacher leaders in low-performing schools*

Endnotes

1   Ann Lieberman, "Laureates Speak: Can Teachers Really Be Leaders?" Kappa Delta Pi Record, Vol. 47, Supplement 1 (Fall 2011): 16-18; Kathryn Singh, "Teacher Leadership: Making Your Voice Count," *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, Vol. 47, Supplement 1 (Fall 2011): 6-10; Melinda M. Mangin and Sara Ray Stoelinga, "Special Issue: Instructional Teacher Leadership in Action," *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, Vol. 13 no. 2 (June 2010): 1-4.

2   Lieberman, "Laureates Speak: Can Teachers Really Be Leaders?"; Singh, "Teacher Leadership: Making Your Voice Count."

3   Jennifer York-Barr and Karen Duke, "What Do We Know About Teacher Leadership? Findings from Two Decades of Scholarship," *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 74, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 287-8; Alma Harris, "Teacher Leadership: More Than Just a Feel-Good Factor?" *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, Vol. 4 no. 3 (September 2005): 205-6; Rachel Curtis, "Finding a New Way: Leveraging Teacher Leadership to Meet Unprecedented Demands" The Aspen Institute (February 2013). While the definitions of teacher leadership remain varied and broad, a consensus is emerging about its most significant elements. See, for instance, York-Barr and Duke, "What Do We Know About Teacher Leadership?" 260; Harris, "Teacher Leadership," 205; Stoelinga and Mangin, "Examining Effective Teacher Leadership: A Case Study Approach," *Harvard Education Review*, Vol. 80, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 430-432. While the above scholars suggest a consensus is emerging despite the lack of a clear definition of teacher leadership, Frank Crowther more confidently contends that, "there exists, in 2012, widespread agreement about what teacher leadership is: its personal attributes, its organizational qualities and its links to authoritative theories of leadership such as strategic leadership, organization-wide leadership, transformational leadership and advocacy leadership." See Crowther, "*Review of Teacher Leadership: the 'New' Foundations of Teacher Education*," *Teaching Education*, Vol. 23 no 1 (2012): 109-110.

4   TNTP, "The Irreplaceables: Understanding the Real Retention Crisis in America's Urban Schools," (2012); Susan Moore Johnson, Jill Harrison Berg, and Morgan L. Donaldson, "Who Stays in Teaching and Why: A Review of the Literature," The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers and Harvard Graduate School of Education (February 2005): 86, 93-97.

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6   York-Barr and Duke, "What Do We Know About Teacher Leadership?" 282-87; Harris, "Teacher Leadership," 206-210.

7   Tennessee Department of Education, "The Common Core State Standards: Tennessee's Transition Plan," slide 2 (1 March 2012).

8   Iowa Department of Education, "Guidance on the Iowa Teacher Leadership and Compensation System," (15 July 2013).

9   Cited with permission from PowerPoint presentation provided by Denver Public Schools "Differentiated Roles Pilot: Strategy for Evaluation and Decision Support"

10   Harris, "Teacher Leadership," 212; York-Barr and Duke, "What Do We Know About Teacher Leadership?" 267.

11   York-Barr and Duke, "What Do We Know About Teacher Leadership?" 270; Harris, "Teacher Leadership," 213.

12   York-Barr, "What Do We Know About Teacher Leadership?" 267; Harris, "Teacher Leadership," 212.

13   York-Barr and Duke, "What Do We Know About Teacher Leadership?" 282; Cynthia L. Carver, Jason Margolis, and Tracy Williams, "Teacher Leadership: Practices, Politics, and Persistence," The New Educator, Vol. 9, no. 3 (2013): 168.

14   York-Barr and Duke, "What Do We Know About Teacher Leadership?" 282.