

## **Teacher Leader Endorsement Concepts and Strategies**

### **Rationale for Teacher Leaders:**

- We know that teachers take on leadership responsibilities in the school and are not often acknowledged for these efforts. A teacher leadership endorsement presents a state-sponsored acknowledgement for teachers who serve in leadership roles.
- Teacher leaders in schools supports the work of principals by creating a system of shared leadership allowing principals to delegate some instructional leadership tasks to teacher leaders to alleviate their stress and to focus on high priority items (Lord & Miller, 2000; Teachers Network Leadership Institute, 2006).
- Teacher leaders in schools also create more professional development providers in the building during a time when districts are being required to cut back on administrative support.

### **Potential Roles for Teacher Leaders:**

A teacher leader endorsement recognizes the expertise of teachers in subject matter knowledge, instructional practices, child development, and teacher needs. Using this knowledge, teacher leaders are able to:

- Mentor or coach new teachers
- Develop and deliver professional development activities
- Lead curriculum standards committees
- Develop curriculum
- Lead School Improvement Initiatives
- Serve as department or grade level chairs
- Serve on school leadership teams
- Become a union chapter leader
- Serve on committees, task forces, etc.
- Respond to crises in the schools (e.g., serve as a substitute, student discipline, respond to teacher's instructional needs, etc.)
- Collect assessment data and help administrators and teachers use it for school improvements (Lord & Miller, 2000; Teachers Network Leadership Institute, 2006)

Illinois' teacher leadership endorsement provides a state recognition for teachers who serve in these roles and have acquired additional leadership training.

Illinois' teacher leader endorsement allows teachers who want to pursue additional leadership training and responsibilities, but want to still remain a teacher to do so without having to complete a full administrative licensure program. However, the teacher leadership endorsement should articulate to administrator licensure and not present another hurdle.

### **What other states are doing:**

#### Louisiana:

- All teacher leader programs are performance-based and aspiring teacher leaders must meet all ELCC and Louisiana state leadership standards.
- Teachers must complete 2 graduate level courses in school leadership. These 2 courses articulate into a full educational leadership program.
- Aimed at teachers who do not want to become administrators, but still want to be leaders in their schools. Typically, these leaders want to be grade level or department chairs. The endorsement has allowed teacher leaders to better understand the principal's role and the needs of the position.
- The endorsement does not mandate a pay raise. This is at the discretion of the district.

- There are no building-level positions that require teachers to have this endorsement.
- Policy link: <http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v131/28v131.doc> (See page 55).

#### Georgia:

- Georgia has recently adopted a policy that created a state teacher leader endorsement.
- Teacher leader programs are performance-based and must address these two leadership standards for teacher leaders: 1) facilitate the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a shared vision; and 2) promote a positive school culture, provide an effective instructional program, apply research best practices, and design comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.
- The teacher leader endorsement does not mandate a pay raise.
- The teacher leader program should provide a career pathway into full school leader certification.
- Policy link: <http://www.gapsc.com/rules/proposed/edprep/505-3-.73.pdf>

#### New York Region One:

- The Distinguished Teacher Leader Program is a partnership of New York Region One and Bank Street College of Education.
- It is a 15-credit certificate program created for teachers who are committed to the classroom but would still like to take on leadership responsibilities in the school.
- Teachers take courses in teacher leadership, curriculum and instruction, field work, and staff development.
- After completing the program, teacher leaders will be able to become instructional leaders, staff developers, and coaches; provide professional development models for teachers and parents; and serve in school-wide leadership capacities.
- After completing the program, teachers may opt to participate in one of the following: the Principals Institute Program, National Board Certification, or continue to collaborate with peers to refine their practice and leadership skills.
- Link: <http://www.bankstreet.edu/lpi/teacherleader.html>

#### San Juan Unified School District, California:

- Negotiated an article in the teacher's contract (Article 24—Creating and Sustaining a Collaborative Culture) with the teacher's union.
- Establishes leadership teams in all district schools made up of faculty, principal, and a vice principal.
- The charge of the leadership teams are to focus on continuous improvement of the teacher, student learning and quality instruction, broaden the leadership base, build a professional learning community, and model leadership to other community members.
- Every Thursday is an early release day and teachers are required to stay and engage in a collaborative activity with their colleagues to improve student achievement. The leadership team develops the agenda and activity.
- The leadership team is responsible for planning 3 annual staff development days.
- Leadership teams are elected by their peers and serve a 3-year term.
- Members of leadership teams earn a \$1400/year stipend.
- The impact of the leadership teams has led teachers to become more intensively engaged in examining student data, determining gaps in performance, and developing action steps to address the gaps.
- Link: [http://www.sjta.org/docs/Contract\\_pdf/Article\\_24.pdf](http://www.sjta.org/docs/Contract_pdf/Article_24.pdf)