EXPLORING
TEACHER LEADERSHIP
Trends and Possibilities
Anthony Rebora
Managing editor, *Education Week Teacher*
Exploring Teacher-Leadership Trends and Possibilities

Expert Presenters:

Therese A. Dozier, director of the Center for Teacher Leadership, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education

Michelle Healy, co-founder of The Odyssey Initiative

Brooke Peters, co-founder, The Odyssey Initiative
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
Teachers Are Interested In and Taking Leadership Roles

- **Half** of teachers say they **have a formal leadership role** in their school, such as department chair, instructional resource, teacher mentor, or leadership team member.

- **Half** of teachers are **at least somewhat interested** in teaching in the classroom part-time combined with other roles or responsibilities in their school or district, including 23% who are extremely or very interested in this option.

- **Most** teachers say they are **not at all interested** in becoming a principal.

Exploring Teacher Leadership Trends and Possibilities

Education Week Webinar
Tuesday, April 30, 2013

Terry Dozier, Director
Center for Teacher Leadership
Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Education
Mission: To promote and support teacher leadership in order to improve teaching and learning.

CTL works with accomplished teachers to . . .

- advance the concept of teachers as change agents.
- provide high-quality professional development to develop passionate, effective leaders.
- share the knowledge, experience, and insight of teachers with policymakers and others.
Historical Context

- Standards movement
- National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future
- National Board Certified Teachers
- Leadership for Learning: Redefining the Teacher as Leader
- Teacher Leader Model Standards
Why Teacher Leadership?

- Cultivates a critical resource for change and improvement in schools.

51% of teachers have a leadership role in their schools, such as department chair, instructional resource, teacher mentor, or leadership team member.

Why Teacher Leadership?

- Cultivates a critical resource for change and improvement in schools.
- Keeps good teachers in the classroom.
Why Veteran Teachers Leave

- Low salaries
- Lack of support from school administrators
- Student discipline problems
- Lack of teacher input into decision making

Source: Richard Ingersoll, University of Pennsylvania
Profile of Teachers With Lower Job Satisfaction

- More likely to be mid-career teachers [6–20 years] (56% vs. 48%)
- More likely to be at least somewhat interested in teaching in the classroom part-time combined with other roles or responsibilities (56% vs. 43%)
- Most teachers (69%) are not at all interested in becoming a principal.

What New Teachers Want

- Teamwork and support
- Professional opportunities that include leadership opportunities
- Fair pay and a differentiated pay structure that rewards outstanding performance, acquiring new skills, and assuming new roles and responsibilities.

Source: Susan Moore Johnson, Harvard University
Why Teacher Leadership?

- Cultivates a largely untapped resource for change and improvement in schools
- Keeps good teachers in the classroom
- Benefits students
- Frees principals from unrealistic expectations
“The lone warrior myth of leadership is a sure route to heroic suicide.”

Heifetz and Linsky (2002)
75% of principals feel the job has become too complex.

“Teacher leadership is the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement.”

-From meta-analysis of teacher leadership research by York-Barr and Duke (2004)
Teacher Leaders . . .

- are excellent teachers
- who positively influence others.
Teacher Leaders are . . .

- Competent
- Credible
- Collaborative
Teacher Leaders . . .

- model effective practice.
- mentor new and struggling teachers.
- conduct professional development activities.
- raise the level of collaboration in schools.
- lead school improvement efforts.
- advocate for the needs of students.
CTL Survey of Accomplished Teachers

- Purposeful sample of recognized teachers
  - National Board Certified Teachers
  - Disney Teachers
  - Milken Educators
  - Teachers of the Year
  - Presidential Math and Science Awardees

- Survey link was sent to approximately 300 teachers, 179 responded from 37 states (60% response rate).
Key Findings

Recognized teachers... 

- are confident of themselves as leaders. (97%)
- are engaged in many leadership roles.
  - Professional development for colleagues (93%)
  - Department chairs/team leaders (84%)
  - Mentor new teachers (84%)
  - Curriculum development (83%)
- lack training in the new leadership roles they are asked to assume. (82%)
- want training in understanding educational policy and issues or working collaboratively with educational policy makers. (100%)
Teacher Leadership PD Needs

**Instructional Impact:** Improving My Own Practice

**Professional Impact:** Working with Colleagues to Improve Outcomes for Students

**Policy Impact:** Advocating for Positive Change
Continuum of Teacher Leadership Development

- Generic Skills
- Role-Specific
- Advanced
- Ongoing PD
CTL Continuum of Teacher Leadership Development

- **National Board Candidate Support:** Structured opportunities to clarify each aspect of the certification process and a network of support for teachers seeking National Board Certification

- **Teacher Leadership 101:** Series of workshops focused on generic skills needed by all teacher leaders

- **Role-Specific Training:** For those tapped for roles such as department chairs, mentors, instructional specialists, and clinical faculty
CTL Continuum of Teacher Leadership Development

- **Teacher as Change Agent**: Online course designed to help teacher leaders become more effective in the policy arena.

- **Dr. Judy Flythe Teacher Leader Award**: Recognizes an exemplary teacher who works collaboratively with colleagues to improve teaching and learning.
Exploring Teacher Leadership Trends and Possibilities

Terry Dozier, Director
Center for Teacher Leadership
Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Education
www.ctl.vcu.edu
tdoziere@vcu.edu
Exploring Teacher Leadership

Presented by Michelle Healy and Brooke Peters
April 30, 2013
Our Project:

- Three teachers and a documentarian
- Visit great schools across the country to:
  - Discover
  - Document
  - Share
- Open a new public school in New York City
1. **WE BELIEVE:**
Educators can and should be at the center of educational reform.

2. **WE BELIEVE:**
Innovation in education is not limited to one type of school. Innovations take place everyday in every type of school, district, private and charter, and we can learn from them.

3. **WE BELIEVE:**
Progressive educational practices can benefit all students and lead to high academic performance by any measure, including high stakes testing.
Our Research

• Visited 53 schools in 23 states
• Observe classrooms in action
• Interview teachers and school leaders
• Share practices via video and blogs on our website
• Use practices to inform the creation of a new public school
Practices informed by our research:

- Looping
- Early Release Day
- Place-Based Education
- Focus on Sustainability and the Arts
- Multi-age Electives
- Teacher Leadership Opportunities
Video

Hybrid Roles: Empowering Teachers
Teacher-Led Schools:
Schools in which the leaders teach on a daily basis

• Denver Green School in Denver, CO
• Reiche Community School in Portland, ME
• Project Learn in Philadelphia, PA
Denver Green School

- **Leadership Structure:** A team of nine founding partners all have leadership tasks within the school. Teachers with established longevity at the school may become partners over time.

- **Three lead partners** do not have full time classrooms and have roles that are more heavily administrative, whereas the majority of the founding partners have classrooms and complete fewer administrative tasks.
Reiche Community School
Grades K-5

- **Three lead teachers** rotate between taking on the administrative head role throughout the day. When the lead teachers are not in the administrative position, they are teaching.

- **All teachers** have a role in the decision-making process of the school and contribute to the shaping of the school’s mission and vision through committee work. Teachers also supervise one another through the practice of peer coaching.
Project Learn:
A K-8 Co-Op School

• A cooperative school where teachers, parents, and students work together to govern the school.

• All members of the community have an equal stake in the school, and all decisions are made through consensus at monthly town meetings. There is no administrative leader.
Schools with Structures to Encourage Teacher Leadership

- Boulder Journey School in Boulder, CO
- The Project School in Bloomington, IN
- Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School, Devens, MA
Boulder Journey School:
An Infant to pre-K Reggio Emilia inspired program

- Teachers are encouraged to engage in action research using their classroom as a lab for learning about child development and instruction.
- Teachers mentor graduate student residents who participate in Boulder Journey’s Early Childhood Licensure program in partnership with the University of Colorado Boulder.
- Teachers are encouraged to publish research in educational publications.
- Leaders evaluate the strengths of staff members and create leadership opportunities and positions for them.
- The staff shares in shaping and revising the school’s mission and vision each year.
The Project School
A K-8 School; Project-based learning approach

• Teachers are given the autonomy to plan curriculum with their grade level team
• Teachers participate in critical friends groups and book study
• “For the Good of the Cause” meetings are held regularly
Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School:
A 7-12 grade school; part of the Coalition of Essential Schools

- Teachers have the freedom to decide their own course offerings
- The faculty takes part in committees and are integral to the hiring process of new staff members
- Each year, teachers evaluate the mission and vision of the school together and make adjustments and revisions
“I love the hybrid position and the halftime teaching. Having a classroom of students keeps me grounded in the work of the class. For policy decisions, I know how it’s going to affect my students and my time.”

-Kevin Brewster
Lead Teacher
Reiche Community School
www.odysseyinitiative.org

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Required Reading from *Education Week*:

**Survey Finds Rising Job Frustration Among Principals**
The 29th annual MetLife Survey of American Teachers found that three out of four K-12 public school principals believe the job has become “too complex,” and about a third will likely go into a different occupation within the next five years. The results tell a story of enduring budget problems in schools and declining morale among both teachers and school leaders.

**Spotlight on Creating School and District Leaders**
To create school and district leaders, school systems must provide opportunities for training, professional development, and meaningful feedback. In this Spotlight, see how some districts are remaking principal evaluations, find out what it takes to build a positive school culture, and look at schools using on-site training to prepare principals for their jobs.