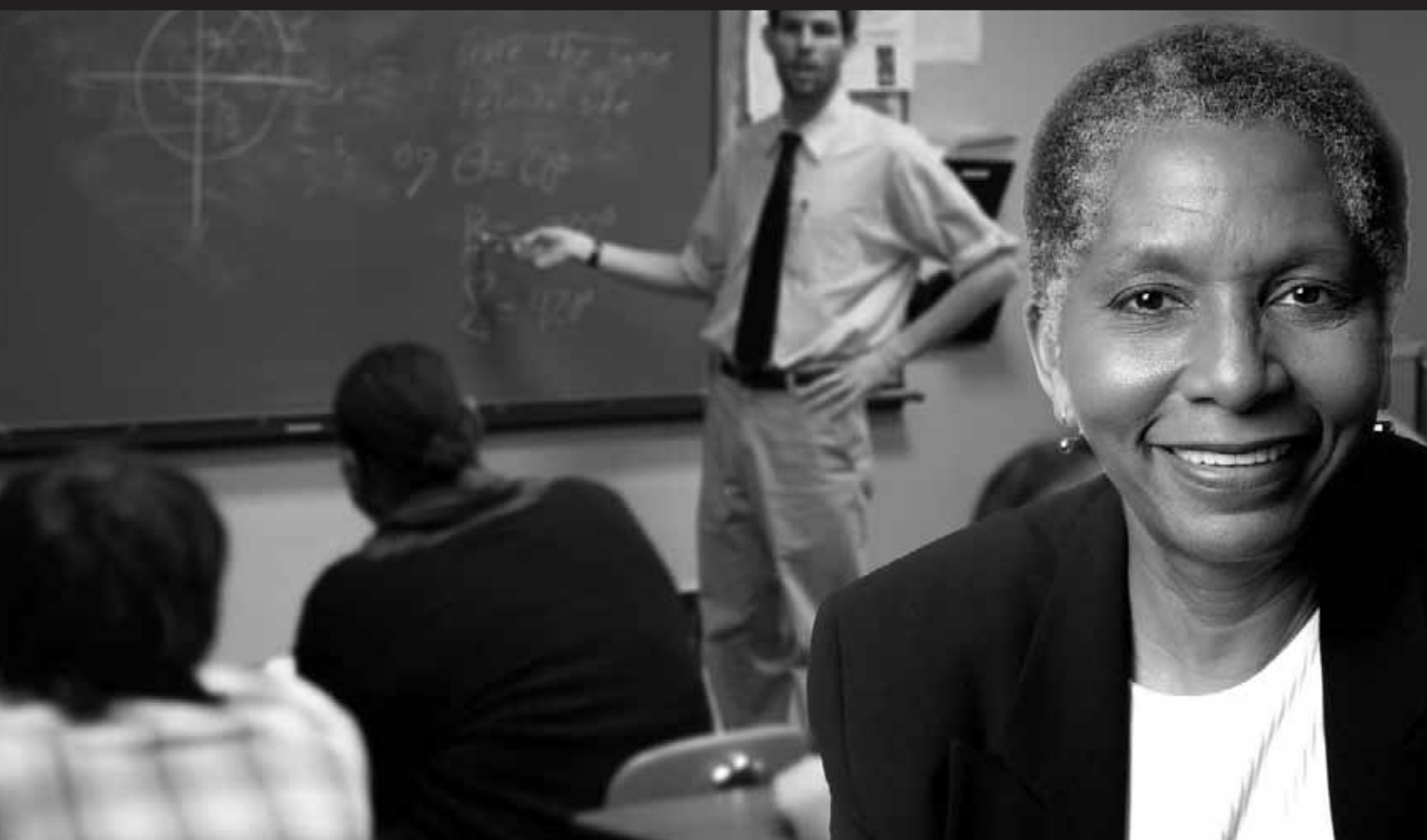


ENHANCING LEADERSHIP QUALITY

TQ SOURCE TIPS & TOOLS:
EMERGING STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE EDUCATOR QUALITY



ABOUT THE NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CENTER FOR TEACHER QUALITY

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) was created to serve as the national resource to which the regional comprehensive centers, states, and other education stakeholders turn for strengthening the quality of teaching—especially in high-poverty, low-performing, and hard-to-staff schools—and for finding guidance in addressing specific needs, thereby ensuring that highly qualified teachers are serving students with special needs.

The TQ Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and is a collaborative effort of ETS, Learning Point Associates, and Vanderbilt University. Integral to the TQ Center's charge is the provision of timely and relevant resources to build the capacity of regional comprehensive centers and states to effectively implement state policy and practice by ensuring that all teachers meet the federal teacher requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

The TQ Center is part of the U.S. Department of Education's Comprehensive Centers program, which includes 16 regional comprehensive centers that provide technical assistance to states within a specified boundary and five content centers that provide expert assistance to benefit states and districts nationwide on key issues related to the NCLB Act.

TQ SOURCE TIPS & TOOLS: EMERGING STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE EDUCATOR QUALITY

(www.tqsource.org/tipsTools.php)

Teaching Quality (TQ) Source Tips & Tools: Emerging Strategies to Enhance Educator Quality is an online resource developed by the TQ Center. It is designed to help education practitioners tap into strategies and resources they can use to enhance educator quality. Information currently is available in five topic areas:

- > **Identifying and Supporting Highly Effective Teachers**
- > **Enhancing Leadership Quality**
- > **Improving Teacher Quality Through the Implementation of a Multitiered Intervention System**
- > **Recruiting Quality Teachers for Mathematics, Science, and Special Education**
- > **Improving Teacher Quality in At-Risk Schools**

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication is based on the TQ Source Tips & Tools topic area "Enhancing Leadership Quality." It summarizes the three key issues in this topic area:

- > **Enhancing Teacher Leadership**
(www2.tqsource.org/strategies/leadership/EnhancingTeacherLeadership.pdf)
- > **Identifying How Highly Effective Leaders Support Teachers**
(www2.tqsource.org/strategies/het/HighlyEffectiveLeaders.pdf)
- > **Improving the Preparation of School and District Leaders**
(www2.tqsource.org/strategies/leadership/ImprovingLeaderPrep.pdf)

For additional information and details, please refer directly to these key issues.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERS

Effective school leaders may be the linchpin of a successful school system. Research has identified school leadership quality as second only to teacher quality in its influence on student achievement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Therefore, investments and strategies that aim to attract and retain more high-quality school leaders through better preparation, licensure, recruitment and hiring, induction and mentoring, professional development, working conditions, compensation, and performance management are likely to lead to improvements in student achievement. Indeed, efforts to raise the quality of the U.S. public school system are unlikely to succeed without attention to the crucial issue of school leadership.

Research has documented the growing demands placed on principals as well as the current principal shortage. It also has emphasized the importance of school leaders in retaining quality teachers, improving student learning, and creating effective schools:

> **The principalship has become a more demanding position.**

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act calls for principals to have “the instructional leadership skills to help teachers teach and students learn” (NCLB, Title II, Section 2113[c][1][A][ii]). This emphasis on instructional leadership has been added to principals’ more traditional managerial responsibilities. As a result of these additional responsibilities as well as NCLB accountability pressures, principals may feel increasingly overwhelmed and ineffective in their positions, causing some to seek employment elsewhere. In addition, the current demands of the principalship may dissuade talented teachers from aspiring to the position. The heightened demands on school leaders must be matched by a heightened commitment to helping the profession understand and carry out these new roles and responsibilities.

> **Principal shortages threaten many school systems.** Whether or not there is a principal shortage depends upon the definition of “shortage” adopted (Roza, 2003). Although there is no dearth of individuals holding a principal certification compared to the number of principalship positions available, many of those individuals are reluctant to take on the position in at-risk or high-need schools. Other individuals may have obtained principal certification as a means for moving up the teacher salary scale but have no interest in pursuing an administrative position.

In addition to number, there are concerns with quality of those certified individuals who are willing to serve as principals at the prevailing wages and conditions—especially in schools with high concentrations of poor and minority students. In particular, urban schools often have difficulty retaining quality principals (Papa, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2002). In this sense, supply does indeed fall short of demand, particularly in more challenging schools and districts.

> **Teacher retention is greatly influenced by the quality of school leaders.**

Recent surveys of teachers (Harris Interactive, 2003; Ingersoll, 2003) consistently find that the quality of support provided by school administrators and the prevalence of other issues that are directly affected by school leaders are chief among the factors that lead teachers to leave or remain in their schools and the profession. The practices of effective school leaders—ranging from establishing a shared vision and fostering a professional school environment to helping advance teachers’ instructional practice and scheduling time for collaboration—make a difference to teachers as they decide whether to remain in their schools and the profession.

> **The stability of the principalship affects student learning.**

Principal turnover is problematic. Not only is it costly and administratively burdensome, but research in New Mexico has found that a correlation exists between student achievement scores and the stability of the principalship (Winograd, 2005). A range of policies, therefore, must be in place to ensure that once recruited and hired, principals are supported and developed so that they will choose to remain in the position.

> **School improvement requires the commitment of a team of outstanding principals and teachers.**

Authentic and systemic school improvement hinges on many factors, but scholars agree that among the most important issues is shared, curriculum-focused leadership (Hopkins, 2001). More than 20 years ago in England, the agency responsible for inspecting independent schools identified leadership as one of the key components of effective schools (Hopkins, 2001). Today, in countries throughout the world, it is widely recognized that no school improvement effort is likely to be sustained without the involvement of teams of strong leaders.

APPLYING THE EDUCATOR CAREER CONTINUUM TO SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

School leaders include not only principals but also assistant principals, other administrators, and classroom teachers who informally or formally take on additional leadership responsibilities. Shared leadership moves away from the notion of a “hero-head” and toward a vision that distributes leadership roles and responsibilities among a large community of school employees (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007). By conceptualizing leadership in this way, a less sharp contrast between teacher and principal emerges and the educator career trajectory is seen instead as involving a more fluid path from classroom teacher to school principal, with many positions of official and informal leadership in between.

Adopting this broad, more encompassing approach to thinking about shared leadership helps to address a key tension in the debate over quality school leadership—namely, the need to attract high-quality teachers into the principalship and other leadership positions without removing too many high-quality instructors away from the classroom teaching force. High-quality teachers and high-quality principals are essential, and classroom teachers should be recruited, retained, and developed into highly effective instructors and leaders. Like classroom teachers, school leaders cycle through a continuum of components—each of which is greatly affected by policy and practice. These components are as follows: preparation and licensure, recruitment and hiring, induction and mentoring, professional development, working conditions, salaries and incentives, and performance management. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Educator Career Continuum



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Not every component is necessarily relevant for every teacher and leadership position, but the specific activities related to each component generally affect the recruitment, retention, and development of classroom teachers and school leaders alike.

Applying the Educator Career Continuum to School Leadership Preparation

As the continuum indicates, educators undergo leadership preparation and, in most cases, obtain licensure. Next, they participate in the recruitment process conducted by schools, which they evaluate based on a number of “soft” and “hard” job characteristics, and continue through the hiring process. For this recruitment and hiring component, effective tools should be available for hiring committees to secure an appropriate match between a school leader’s qualifications and the needs of a school.

After being hired, school leaders should then be provided with a high-quality induction and mentoring program that equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge to be effective from the start (The Education Alliance & National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2003; Zellner, Jenkins, Gideon, Doughty, & McNamara, 2002). Their induction should seamlessly transition into high-quality professional development that nurtures leadership skills in real-world contexts. This professional development as well as attractive working conditions and a compensation package of salaries and incentives should be strategically provided throughout a school leader’s career in education. At various junctures, the leader’s performance should be monitored; feedback for growth as well as opportunities for career advancement should be provided accordingly.

Of course, depending on what they see and experience in any component, potential school leaders may choose to exit the school labor market altogether. For that reason, it is increasingly important to develop policies and strategies that provide a seamless transition between all components, ensure continuous growth and satisfaction for school leaders, and promote the end result of improved learning for all students.

STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES TO ENHANCE LEADERSHIP QUALITY

Based on the TQ Center's Tips & Tools online resources, the following sections provide strategies and resources for education decision makers—including policymakers, district and school administrators, and state education agency staff—to enhance leadership quality. These sections focus on enhancing teacher leadership, identifying how highly effective leaders support teachers, and improving the preparation of school and district leaders.

ENHANCING TEACHER LEADERSHIP

According to Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner (2000, p. 28), “Teachers are leaders when they function in professional communities to affect student learning, contribute to school improvement, inspire excellence in practice, and empower stakeholders to participate in educational improvement.” In addition, teacher leaders “help guide fellow teachers and the school at large toward higher standards of achievement and recognition of individual responsibility for school reform” (Childs-Bowen et al., 2000, p. 27). Studies show that leading and learning are interrelated—that “teacher leaders grow in their understanding of instructional, professional, and organizational practice as they lead” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 288).

Enhancing teacher leadership can help schools and districts reach the following goals: (1) improve teacher quality; (2) improve student learning; (3) ensure that education reform efforts work; (4) recruit, retain, motivate, and reward accomplished teachers; (5) provide opportunities for professional growth; (6) extend principal capacity; and (7) create a democratic school environment.

Strategies

To encourage teacher leadership at the school level, district and school administrators should do the following:

- > **Value and respect the role and work of teacher leaders.** Principals and administrators can acknowledge the value of teacher leaders by including teachers on a schoolwide leadership team that makes building decisions about school environment, culture, curriculum, and instruction (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The key is that teachers have real input and contributions to school decision making (Birky, Shelton, & Headley, 2006).
- > **Provide technical support for teacher leaders.** Teachers may need support, training, and materials to succeed in leadership roles. Professional development opportunities should be made available to teacher leaders who are directly connected to the responsibilities of those roles.
- > **Provide affirmation for teachers' leadership tasks.** Principals should recognize and reward teacher efforts that contribute to the positive school culture of learning (Pankake, & Moller, 2007).

- > **Promote and facilitate collaboration.** Principals have a responsibility to structure the school day and teachers' schedules so that teachers have time to collaborate on teaching strategies, develop lesson plans together, and determine curricular goals (Knapp, Copland, Plecki, & Portin, 2006).
- > **Provide opportunities for teachers to analyze student achievement data and other types of data to improve instruction.** These data can be used to guide decisions relating to curriculum, instruction, and programming. Teachers should be included in the decision-making process, and decisions should be transparent and based on data (Knapp, Swinnerton, Copland, & Monpas-Huber, 2006).
- > **Encourage teachers to participate in professional teacher networks.** Such networks help teachers improve their practice, develop supportive collegial relationships, gain new ideas, and share effective strategies. These networks also enhance the professionalism of teaching and teachers by providing opportunities for ongoing collaboration and growth of expertise.

Resources

- Caine, G., & Caine, R. N. (2000, May). The learning community as a foundation for developing teacher leaders. *National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Bulletin*, 84(616), 7–14.
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Additional resources for this area are available at *Enhancing Teacher Leadership* (www2.tqsource.org/strategies/leadership/EnhancingTeacherLeadership.pdf).

IDENTIFYING HOW HIGHLY EFFECTIVE LEADERS SUPPORT TEACHERS

Once prepared and hired, school leaders can demonstrate behaviors and perform everyday actions that make the difference between whether a school advances toward its mission of educational success or gets stuck in a cycle of poor performance and poor results. The most important role of school leaders is to help teachers teach well. According to Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, and Liu (2001), there also is consensus regarding the important role of the school principal in establishing, reinforcing, and realigning the school culture and in promoting collegiality in working toward common goals.

A key characteristic of effective school leaders is that they create an environment of shared responsibility, authority, and decision making in the school so faculty and staff have ownership over decisions that affect student learning. Anthes and Long (2006) note, "The principal is not the only leader in a healthy school" (p. 3). Leadership quality and teacher quality are inextricably intertwined. There is much that an effective school leader can do to improve the effectiveness and retention rates of teaching staff.

Strategies

To support teachers, principals and district administrators should do the following:

- > **Establish a shared school vision and set school goals by encouraging shared leadership.** Such collaboration can be accomplished through the development of a school leadership team that works with the principal and the rest of the school staff. This team can be charged with setting the vision, goals, and strategies of the school—based on student achievement data and other information about the school (Education Commission of the States, n.d.)
- > **Promote effective staffing, professional development, and teacher evaluation strategies.** Principals and administrators can ensure productive outcomes by selecting and assigning teachers effectively; providing professional development opportunities for teachers to improve their skills, knowledge, and capabilities; and adopting tools for teacher evaluation that provide meaningful feedback for teachers to improve their practice.
- > **Create a positive and supportive school culture.** A positive school culture for teachers can be promoted through shared leadership, time to collaborate with colleagues, recognition for highly effective teaching, a focus on practical issues such as using time and data effectively, and provision of effective instructional leadership that guides effective teaching practice in a mutually supportive manner (Education Commission of the States, n.d.). Another aspect of creating a supportive environment is to ensure that school facilities are functioning and well maintained (Johnson, 2006).

- > **Serve as an instructional leader.** This approach includes ensuring alignment across the curriculum, including alignment across subject areas and grade levels; finding the appropriate balance between curricular prescription and academic freedom; and providing instructional guidance for reaching student populations who have particular challenges (Johnson, 2006).
- > **Develop, manage, and exhibit the personal qualities necessary for effective leadership.** According to Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins (2006), these personal leadership qualities include open-mindedness, readiness to learn from others, flexibility in one's views, persistence in the pursuit of achievement for all, resilience, and optimism.
- > **Work with districts to hire a sufficient number of qualified and effective teachers.** The hiring of teachers may be a district responsibility, but principals often play an important role in the interview process. Principals can improve overall teacher effectiveness by working with districts to hire individuals who demonstrate outstanding pedagogical skills and content knowledge.
- > **Recognize that there is no foolproof set of strategies to develop highly effective teachers.** Experimentation, innovation, and a certain degree of data-based risk taking are needed when principals and administrators develop strategies for ensuring highly effective teachers. In addition, principals and administrators need to set aside time and resources for evaluating whether the adopted strategies have been successful in meeting their intended goals.

Resources

- Education Commission of the States. (n.d.). *Education leadership policy toolkit*. Denver, CO: Author. Retrieved November 10, 2008, from <http://www.ecs.org/MetLifeToolkit/index-home.html>
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Additional resources for this area are available at *Identifying How Highly Effective Leaders Support Teachers* (www2.tqsource.org/strategies/het/HighlyEffectiveLeaders.pdf).

IMPROVING THE PREPARATION OF SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEADERS

In many schools and districts, current leaders lack the necessary skills and preparation for the roles to which they have been assigned. Improving the preparation of school and district leaders is a critical element in ensuring the presence of high-quality educators—both teachers and leaders.

Exemplary principal-training programs prepare candidates to be effective instructional leaders for students and teachers. By focusing on instructional leadership and school improvement, such preparation programs train principals to develop and evaluate curriculum, use data to diagnose the learning needs of students, coach teachers, and plan professional development. In addition, such “programs aim to develop transformational leaders who work to improve the school as an organization, develop norms and structures that support high-quality teaching and learning, enhance the capacity of the faculty to meet the needs of students, and implement strategies that will improve student outcomes” (LaPointe, Darling-Hammond, & Myerson, 2007, p. 6).

Strategies

To improve leadership preparation, educators, policymakers, state education agency officials, and institutions of higher education should do the following:

> **Establish state leadership standards.** Leadership standards should be linked and aligned to evaluation systems, professional development requirements, and the direct needs of the districts. Implementation of such standards may mean that local school districts, statewide agencies, and universities have to collaborate and communicate in a more meaningful way (The Wallace Foundation, 2006). In addition, leadership preparation programs should then be monitored based on participant performance in the leadership program in order to assess whether these standards are being met. This approach should include evidence of growth in leading and managing as well as success on the job after completion of the program.

> **Prepare and recruit diverse cohorts of leader candidates.** This approach should include attention to recruiting for diversity based on race, gender, region, content interest, and career focus. For urban and rural districts, such leadership preparation and recruitment will likely include “growing your own” leaders for hard-to-staff schools in those areas. Cohort groups in the leadership preparation program should be organized to promote teamwork, collaboration, and support. Most important, all stakeholders should work to single out high-quality candidates for leadership preparation instead of relying on self-selected candidates with administrative credentials but little demonstrated talent for leadership. Recruiting high-quality, diverse candidates to leadership preparation programs may require providing financial support for candidates to permit them to participate in an intensive program with a full-time, supervised internship.

- > **Coordinate state and district leadership training opportunities while developing and improving leadership preparation programs.** This approach should include designing a comprehensive and coherent curriculum for leader preparation programs, providing leader candidates with mentoring from effective principals, developing a supportive cohort structure for leader candidates, and providing candidates with administrative internships (The Wallace Foundation, 2006). Mentorship programs should involve creating standards and training programs for the mentors of beginning principals, and the curriculum should include supervised field-based experiences for real-world training. In order to achieve a coherent program, universities and school districts should work together to recruit, train, and support qualified candidates for these programs.
- > **Create clear pathways to leadership certification.** State policy agencies need to have clear guidelines and requirements for licensure and certification of leader candidates. Not only should the requirements be clear and aligned to the standards of effective leadership, but the communication of the requirements and the process to go about it should be readily accessible and easy to understand (The Wallace Foundation, 2006).

Resources

- Council of Chief State School Officers. (2008). *Educational leadership policy standards: ISLLC 2008* (as adopted by the national Policy Board for Educational Administration). Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved November 10, 2008, from <http://www.ccsso.org/publications/Download.cfm?Filename=ISLLC%202008%20final.pdf>
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Additional resources for this area are available at *Improving the Preparation of School and District Leaders* (www2.tqsource.org/strategies/leadership/ImprovingLeaderPrep.pdf).

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