

LEADING FROM EVERY SEAT: EMPOWERING PRINCIPALS TO CULTIVATE TEACHER LEADERSHIP FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

VERSION 1.0

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A CALL TO ACTION AND COLLABORATION

New Leaders grounds its work in a simple, yet profound belief: *leadership matters*.

Since 2000, we have prepared outstanding principals to transform America's underserved schools and communities. Yet the role has become vastly more complex and demanding—and principals, no matter how heroic, cannot do it all alone. Great leaders, by definition, bring out the best in their people to create exceptional teams.

Through our work with high-performing principals across the country, we have gained important insights into the critical role other school and system-level leaders play in accelerating school transformation, infusing schools with much needed expertise and capacity to strengthen teaching and boost student learning. For that reason, we have increasingly turned our attention to supporting the development of teacher leaders, instructional leadership teams, and principal supervisors, helping to build communities of leaders within schools and across school systems.

This white paper on teacher leadership draws on our experience and supports our efforts to advance the policies and practices that enable great school leaders to succeed. We hope it will serve as a springboard for new conversations, more collaboration, and even deeper insights for our organization and for the field.

We anticipate and look forward to updating this publication and our policy recommendations related to teacher leadership as we continue to learn in the months and years ahead.

If you have questions, new ideas to share, or just want to join the discussion, please contact policyteam@newleaders.org.

We look forward to working with you so that, together, we can enable and empower teachers, principals, district and state officials, policymakers, and other education advocates to *cultivate teacher leadership for school improvement*.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication was made possible by the contributions of a variety of content experts and practitioners within the New Leaders community.

Policy, Strategy, and Research

Alexandra Broin (lead writer and project manager), Ben Fenton, Jackie Gran, Jill Grossman, Gina Ikemoto, Matt Kelemen, Lloyd Nerenberg, Marianna Valdez, and Margaret Young

Marketing, Communications, and Design

Kate Gilligan, Amy Norskog, Virginia Patterson, and Debra Wexler

Program Design, Program Delivery, and Operations

Kavish Burney, Aja Foote, Avni Gupta-Kagan, Alison Johnson, Deborah Jordan, Glynis Jordan, Verta Maloney, Charlotte Nugent, Laura Robell, Andrea Snoddy, and M. Très Watson

School Leaders and Aspiring Principals

Carolyne Albert-Garvey (Cohort 4 New Leader, Washington, DC), Niki Brown (Cohort 10 New Leader, Prince George's County), Virginia Hiltz (Cohort 14 Aspiring Principal, Chicago), Erick Pruitt (Cohort 5 New Leader, Chicago), and John Thuet (Cohort 14 Aspiring Principal, Chicago)

We are also deeply indebted to staff and students of Expeditionary Learning School for Community Leaders, whose experience and insights helped bring our policy analyses and recommendations to life.

School Leaders

David O'Hara (Cohort 10 New Leader, New York) and Bethany O'Shea (Cohort 13 New Leader, New York)

Aspiring Principal

Dawood Abdul-Hameed (Cohort 14 Aspiring Principal, New York)

Teacher Leaders

Ray Ahmed, Alexandra Edwards, Mike Kosciol, Brandon Lotti, Rachel Madris, and Kevin Mears

Student Leaders

Amber Rivera, Dana Stewart, and Yancy Thomas

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GREAT PRINCIPALS CULTIVATE LEADERSHIP

When launching the Teach to Lead initiative in March 2014, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan articulated the urgent need for teacher leadership: “There’s only one way the big, important, difficult changes now under way in schools are going to truly pay off for kids—and that’s with your [teacher] leadership.” In a nation where large numbers of teachers leave the profession after just a few years and a majority of principals report the job is now too complex, teacher leadership is a promising strategy for addressing persistent challenges facing our education system.

Yet to deliver on the promise of teacher leadership, we must address the reality that teacher leader roles tend to be poorly defined, vaguely defined, or not defined at all—creating confusion regarding who is ready to become a leader, how they should spend their time, what success looks like, and what support and resources they require to be successful on the job.

Principals are uniquely positioned to develop and support clearly defined teacher leadership roles that advance school improvement priorities and reflect individual teacher strengths, interests, and needs.

Based on our experience and emerging research from the field, we have identified five practices great principals employ to cultivate effective teacher leader roles. While these practices are interconnected and mutually supportive, for ease we have organized them into a “Principal’s Checklist”—key actions great principals take to cultivate teacher leadership for school improvement:

<p>ACTION 1 Identify Teachers Ready to Lead</p>	<p>ACTION 2 Distribute Leadership Schoolwide</p>	<p>ACTION 3 Provide High-Quality Leadership Training</p>	<p>ACTION 4 Set Teacher Leader Goals for Growth and Results</p>	<p>ACTION 5 Allocate School Resources for Teacher Leadership</p>
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We have structured this paper into five briefs focused on each of these actions. Within each topical brief, we identify ways local, state, and federal policymakers can create conditions that support great leaders as they work to check these items off of their to-do lists. These research-based, practice-driven policy recommendations reflect New Leaders’ unique position as an organization that tackles school improvement from several angles: we develop school leaders, teacher leaders, and instructional leadership teams; we conduct original research on leadership issues; we provide implementation support services to districts and states; and we engage directly with policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels.

Our recommendations are designed to be accessible to and actionable for a wide range of stakeholders, including practitioners, researchers, school system leaders, and policymakers. We specifically call out the policies and practices that enable and empower principals to foster effective teacher leadership to meet three pressing human capital needs, all the while strengthening and elevating the teaching profession. The human capital needs we prioritize include: (1) bolstering the pipeline of future school leaders, (2) better supporting today’s principals in leading school improvement, and (3) making our education system more equitable and effective by encouraging top educators to teach and lead in underserved schools.

Finally, to help bring these policy recommendations to life and illustrate what is possible, we have incorporated throughout this paper a case study featuring educators at Expeditionary Learning School for Community Leaders, where school leaders and teachers have collaborated to cultivate teacher (and student) leadership for dramatic school improvement.

This is a time of significant and rapid change in our education system—new standards, new assessments, and new approaches to educator evaluation and support—and with these changes come both challenges and opportunities. Now, more than ever, we need leaders, in classrooms and across schools and school systems, capable of moving us from where we are to where we aspire to be. Our children, our communities, and our country deserve nothing less.

Great Principals Build Communities of Leaders:

A CASE STUDY

Principal David O'Hara



From the outside, Expeditionary Learning School for Community Leaders (known as “Leaders” to students, staff, and the community) in the Bensonhurst neighborhood of Brooklyn looks much like any other urban public high school in any other city across the country: four stories of light red brick sit atop a solid foundation of concrete and large windows outfitted with the occasional air conditioning unit pour light into the high-ceilinged classrooms of the historic building.

In many ways, the Lafayette Education Complex, now home to five co-located schools after the closing of Lafayette High School, is a microcosm of New York City at large, where small schools, tight budgets, and large facilities mean that the majority of public schools in the city now share space with another school. And the closing of Lafayette reflects yet another trend plaguing the city and our nation: a once thriving school shut down for persistently failing to provide students with a high-quality education.

Once inside the massive structure, having passed through a metal detector and security checkpoint and meandered up the stairwell to the southeast corner of the second floor, it is clear that something else—something truly special—is now happening within these walls.

The familiar hum of students and teachers at work echoes through the hallway of Leaders. More audible chatter and the sound of typing drift from the main office. Three students, two

sporting a black polo t-shirt emblazoned with the Leaders logo and the third decked out for school spirit week, walk toward the college resource center.

The center is home base for the school’s college counselor and is the heart and soul of a school that has seen its graduation rate nearly triple—up to 85 percent from 30 percent—in just four years.

The college matriculation rate for graduates is now 100 percent.

This success is all the more remarkable given the student population Leaders serves: 90 percent of students will be the first in their family to attend college, 80 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, one-fifth are English learners, and one-quarter are students with disabilities. Moreover, Leaders is truly a melting pot: the diverse student body represents 36 different countries and 22 native languages. And Leaders serves a small, but significant number of formerly incarcerated youth.

For Principal David O’Hara and Assistant Principal Bethany O’Shea, these are the students they are dedicated to serving. And they view the progress they have already achieved as just the beginning.

“We’ve prepared 85 percent of our students to graduate the past two years. That’s amazing,” O’Hara reflects. “But that means we failed 15 percent of our kids. And that’s unacceptable.”



Leaders has seen its graduation rate nearly triple—up to 85 percent from 30 percent—in just four years.



Assistant Principal Bethany O'Shea



Getting every graduate into college is a huge accomplishment, but that, too, is insufficient for Leaders, where the ultimate goal is to get students “to and through” college. To that end, staff members track students’ postsecondary progress and are learning a great deal about which institutions of higher education have been most and least supportive for Leaders graduates, all of which informs the counseling provided to current students as they prepare college applications and for life after Leaders.

This model—high expectations combined with intensive, caring support—is the backbone of Leaders’ approach and it permeates everything they do. Truly, the school’s name says it all: Leaders is about building leaders, including students and staff, who are prepared, empowered, and committed to changing the world.

“We are more effective when we take a collaborative, democratic approach,” says O’Hara. “That means involving staff and students in decision-making and providing everyone at our school with real opportunities to be leaders.”

Teacher leadership at Leaders has grown out of this collaborative approach and is built on a shared belief that, no matter the challenge nor how insurmountable it may seem, “the answer is in the room.”

As all principals should be, O’Hara and O’Shea are fierce advocates for teachers and their leadership development. O’Hara and O’Shea enable and empower teachers to lead every day by: designing differentiated positions that meet school and individual needs; encouraging promising leaders to take on leadership roles; creating a school culture (and support systems) where teachers can exercise a range of leadership skills and responsibilities; delivering leadership training through school-based professional development and connecting teachers to other programs and networks of like-minded teacher leaders (expanding their conception of “the room” beyond the walls of Leaders); providing robust developmental support through a revolutionary teacher-designed and teacher-led evaluation and support process; and allocating school resources, including time and money, in innovative, thoughtful ways to support and promote teacher leadership.

The experience of Principal O’Hara, Assistant Principal O’Shea, and their leadership team—described in greater detail throughout this publication—confirms that when principals, teachers, and even students lead, together, they can accomplish incredible things for each other, their school, and the larger community.

Leaders is about building leaders, including students and staff, who are prepared, empowered, and committed to changing the world.

TEACHER LEADERSHIP: LESSONS LEARNED

During our 15 years working with and learning from school leaders like David O’Hara, Bethany O’Shea, and more than 1,600 principals and teacher leaders across the country, New Leaders has learned three critical lessons that highlight the importance of teacher leadership:

LESSON 1

Many educators lack the knowledge, skills, experience, and disposition to become transformational principals.

Neither teacher preparation programs nor most conventional professional development offerings provide teachers with exposure to leadership concepts or authentic opportunities to practice leading other adults. When educators do enter a principal preparation program, they often lack foundational adult leadership knowledge and skills, which we have discovered require more time and practice to develop compared to other leadership competencies.ⁱ Not surprisingly, despite an ample supply of certified school administrators, superintendents struggle to find candidates who are truly ready to lead, and only 41 percent of urban superintendents are satisfied with the performance of their current principal corps.ⁱⁱ As an organization focused on developing principals capable of transforming schools from their first day on the job, we knew we had to get selection into our program right. Moreover, to support our district partners’ demand for more outstanding principals, we had to strengthen the leadership skills of the talent pool from which we select. **To meet these needs, New Leaders launched a program that cultivates promising leaders before they enter our principal preparation program, simultaneously building a cadre of teacher leaders getting immediate results for the students and educators they support.**

LESSON 2

The role of the principal has become vastly more complex and demanding—and principals, no matter how heroic, cannot do it all alone.

Today’s principals are responsible for implementing a wide range of strategies aimed at improving teaching and learning—a new vision for the role that holds enormous promise for school improvement, but that also raises important questions about the feasibility of requiring a single individual to possess such sweeping expertise and to effectively execute so many responsibilities. Seventy percent of principals indicate their responsibilities have changed dramatically over the past five years and 75 percent of principals now report the job is too complex.ⁱⁱⁱ The most effective principals have strong leadership teams in place to help them implement school improvement strategies and the best leadership teams include both administrators—such as assistant principals and deans—and teacher leaders—such as grade-level team leads, instructional coaches, and mentor teachers. By sharing and distributing leadership, principals can focus their time and energy on their most important responsibilities while drawing on and strengthening the skills of their entire staff to support school improvement. **To expand our reach and support sitting principals in their efforts to improve teacher effectiveness, accelerate student achievement, and transform schools, New Leaders developed a program to strengthen the caliber of instructional leadership teams.**

LESSON 3

Staff turnover is highest in the schools most in need of strong, consistent teaching and leading. Our principals lead schools serving primarily students of color and students from low-income communities. Unfortunately, minority students and students living in or near poverty continue to suffer unequal access to the resources that matter most in education: great teachers and great principals. Convincing the best teachers to work in schools plagued by historical neglect, persistent leadership changes, inadequate and unequal funding, or the threats (real or perceived) associated with communities stricken by poverty or violence can feel like an insurmountable obstacle. Getting great teachers to remain in such conditions can seem near impossible. Yet teachers report that school leadership matters to their career choices. In fact, 97 percent of teachers list school leadership as essential or very important for their retention—more than any other factor.^{iv} And over half of all teachers who left the profession did so because they lacked advancement opportunities,^v which are often identified by principals. Coupled with the right school leader and the right incentives, teacher leadership is a strategy for attracting and retaining great teachers, particularly in our nation’s highest need schools. **To truly deliver on our mission, New Leaders is strengthening and innovating our leadership programs and services to cultivate teacher leadership to get and keep great educators in the schools and communities we serve.**

TEACHER LEADERSHIP: A SMART INVESTMENT

As we continue to learn, New Leaders now has a unique opportunity to shine a spotlight on these lessons and help shape future investments in teacher leadership. Such efforts as the Teach to Lead initiative are an exciting indication of renewed collective energy for teacher leadership. Moreover, recent commitments from Congressional leaders to reauthorize outdated education laws present an opportunity for lawmakers to update federal education policy to recognize the important role a variety of school-based leaders play in improving teaching, learning, and overall school performance—and to prioritize leadership investments.

Much of the existing research on teacher leadership demonstrates how providing teachers with leadership opportunities is a smart investment in the teaching profession and highlights the critical need to bring teacher voice into policy conversations. We wholeheartedly agree.

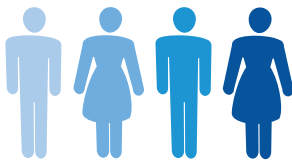
Our addition to the teacher leadership conversation is grounded in the recognition that principals are critical to the successful implementation of any education reform initiative, including teacher leadership. We cannot neglect the vital and immediate role principals play in creating authentic leadership experiences for teachers. Given these realities, we view teacher leadership as an investment that enables us to address three pressing human capital priorities: (1) bolstering the pipeline of future school leaders, (2) better supporting today's principals in leading school improvement, and (3) making our education system more equitable and effective by encouraging more great educators to teach and lead in underserved schools.

SPECIFICALLY, WE BELIEVE:

1

Teacher leadership is an investment in the school leaders of tomorrow.

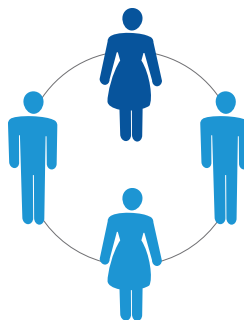
Teacher leaders are a key part of a school leadership pipeline; they serve as a **bench of future school leaders who have authentic adult and instructional leadership experience** that will set them up for later success as they take on increasing leadership responsibilities.



2

Teacher leadership is an investment in school improvement today.

Teacher leaders help principals get their work done well and in a sustainable manner. They are **instrumental members of instructional leadership teams that implement a wide range of school-level reforms** aimed at improving teacher effectiveness and student achievement.



3

Teacher leadership is an investment in our highest need schools.

Teacher leadership is a **talent management strategy school leaders can use to attract and retain great teachers** and that districts can use to attract and retain great teachers and leaders; this strategy is particularly important in traditionally underserved communities.



The recommendations that follow reflect our belief that school leaders are uniquely positioned to develop and support clearly defined teacher leadership roles and our commitment to fostering local, state, and federal policies and practices that enable and empower principals to *cultivate teacher leadership for school improvement*.

Identify Teachers Ready to Lead

Effective teacher leadership has two ingredients: great teaching and great leading. Teacher leaders are most effective when they have strong instructional skills and high leadership potential.

THE CHALLENGE:

Teachers and principals lack critical knowledge and expertise related to teacher leader readiness. Despite emerging research on teacher leader competencies, as well as a set of model standards,^{vi} teachers often move into leadership roles without the expertise and background they need to be successful. When filling teacher leader positions, principals tend to rely on such indicators as motivation and classroom experience, often due to an inadequate talent pool and a dearth of teachers with deep content knowledge.^{vii} This challenge is compounded by the lack of reliable teacher leader selection criteria.^{viii}

Principals lack autonomy to hire and promote the right teachers into leadership positions. Even when principals do identify teachers who are ready to lead, only 32 percent believe they have sufficient authority to recognize and reward those individuals with additional responsibilities.^{ix} Local policies often limit principals' ability to manage their staff,^x leaving them with inadequate control over who they can hire and promote into teacher leadership positions.

THE NEED:

Our schools need more outstanding teachers who have: (1) content expertise, (2) excellent instructional skills, and (3) a proven record of getting results for students. Emerging research^{xi} and our experience show that these three characteristics ensure a teacher leader will be accepted by peers as a resource for deepening their subject-matter knowledge and strengthening their classroom practice. Moreover, they signal to a principal that the teacher has the foundational knowledge and demonstrated skills to improve teaching and learning across classrooms in service of school improvement goals.

Principals need to be able to screen for characteristics predictive of teacher leader effectiveness. New Leaders has found that teachers who have adult leadership experience and know how to use data to inform instruction before entering a leadership training program exhibit stronger leadership skills once on the job.^{xii} In addition, research shows that teacher leaders require strong interpersonal skills, a propensity for innovation, and a deep commitment to the success of all teachers and students.^{xiii} Finally, certain attributes (*e.g.*, experience with middle-school students or Spanish-language fluency) can be valuable for leaders in specific school settings.^{xiv}

The field needs more research on teacher leadership outcomes. Though promising, the research cited above is limited in that it has not studied the correlation between teacher leadership traits and student outcomes. A teacher leadership research agenda should build on existing evidence to inform a robust profile of effective teacher leaders, including identifying indicators predictive of future effectiveness.

Principals need strong talent management skills and authority to hire and promote their staff. Great principals cultivate leadership early and often—including during initial teacher hiring.^{xv} Yet staffing authority is the most important and commonly lacking condition for principal and school effectiveness.^{xvi} Principals should be able to hire teachers with leadership potential or to hire or promote the right teachers into leadership positions.

Though Principal O'Hara is now in his fourth year at Leaders, they only recently started doing teacher leadership work in earnest. "My first priority was ensuring top-notch teaching," he says. "I needed to know we were all working together on a strong, shared instructional foundation" before gradually releasing instructional leadership responsibilities to teachers. Now that they are deep into their leadership work, teachers are learning new insights about the unique skills required to move from teacher to leader, illuminating the professional challenges and opportunities presented by teacher leadership. "As a leader, I'm developing and using completely different skills than what I use in my classroom every day," says Rachel, 11th and 12th grade team lead and the school's instructional guide. "Understanding how adult learning is different from (and similar to) student learning is not something I had thought about before. It's hard, but it's also intellectually engaging and exciting." Reflecting this dual skillset required of teacher leaders, O'Hara draws on best practices from the robust hiring process they've put in place for new staff to assess teachers' classroom expertise, student results, and leadership potential—though he admits that instinct still plays a role, particularly when it comes to the leadership piece. O'Hara has focused on identifying and promoting teachers ready to lead from within the existing staff, noting that he would be hard-pressed to put a new teacher into a leadership position without first having evidence that they have acclimated into Leaders' Expeditionary Learning-focused community, an important school-specific requirement. Sometimes this commitment has required O'Hara to put friendly pressure on teachers with expertise and potential to step up. "David gave me that push of encouragement I needed to take on a leadership role," says Mike, social studies department facilitator. When asked how important it is for him to have autonomy over who to hire and promote into personalized leadership roles, O'Hara responds with a straightforward, "Very."



Identify Teachers Ready to Lead

THE PRINCIPAL ROLE

Principals are responsible for identifying the right individual for each position in their school, including teacher leaders.

THE SOLUTIONS:

Policymakers at all levels of our education system can enable and empower school leaders to strategically recruit, hire, and promote teachers ready to lead into leadership positions.

LOCAL	STATE	FEDERAL
<p>Encourage Content Expertise & Promote Equity: Provide financial incentives that reward teachers who deepen their subject-matter expertise and encourage teachers with deep content knowledge to work in schools where they are most needed. <i>(Note: This action may also be a state-level action.)</i></p> <p>Identify Promising Leaders: Use the results of a fair, accurate, and reliable evaluation and support system to identify effective teachers and share that information with principals to help them strategically recruit candidates for teacher leader roles.</p> <p>Foster Effective Teacher Leader Roles: Encourage principals to create teacher leadership positions tailored to meet school needs (<i>e.g.</i>, through a local teacher leadership pilot program). Identify the most effective roles and share model or exemplary job descriptions, as appropriate, to encourage wide adoption. Ensure models and exemplars clearly identify research-based prerequisite skills as well as leadership responsibilities and performance expectations vis-à-vis school improvement goals. Use school-developed roles to guide the development of future districtwide initiatives (similar to the bottom-up approach of the Differentiated Roles pilot in Denver).</p> <p>Screen for Competencies & Results: Develop hiring tools for teacher leader roles. Tools should help principals screen for teacher leader competencies and past evidence of results.</p>	<p>Invest in New Ideas & Prioritize Equity: Pilot teacher leadership models to understand how state standards or guidance can be used to support various types of teacher leadership positions. Set a high bar for district pilots, but approve a diverse mix of approaches to identify what works and inform a coherent statewide policy based on proven solutions. Consider prioritizing pilot programs specifically for high-need schools (<i>e.g.</i>, federal priority or focus schools, schools or districts serving large populations of high-need students, or schools or districts with high staff turnover or in hard-to-staff locales).</p> <p>Support Effective Roles: Develop model job descriptions for use by districts and schools that amplify the results of effective educators and identify clear responsibilities and performance expectations for the role. Provide technical assistance to districts and principals to help them design differentiated teacher leader roles that support school improvement efforts.</p> <p>Support Principals' Talent Management Priorities: Develop resources and model trainings, based on existing research, that help principals identify the right members for an instructional leadership team, form the team, and help it function well. <i>(Note: Ensure resources and training align with related requirements for principal preparation. If necessary, upgrade leadership standards and preparation program requirements.)</i></p>	<p>Uncover New Ideas: Convene experts and practitioners to discuss different teacher leadership models, share best practices, develop solutions to leadership challenges, and collaborate on innovative approaches (<i>e.g.</i>, through additional Teach to Lead convenings).</p> <p>Seed Innovation: Use funds to support promising and evidence-based teacher leadership models and strategies.</p> <p>Identify What Works: Use funds to support a teacher leadership research agenda that includes pilot programs with an evaluation component.</p> <p>Encourage Data-Driven Recruitment: Support states in ensuring all districts develop and implement an evaluation and support system that informs personnel decisions (<i>e.g.</i>, identifies teachers ready to lead).</p> <p>Invest in Principals' Talent Management Skills: Use the new supplemental priorities and definitions (Priority 10—Improving the Effectiveness of Principals) to target discretionary funds to projects focused on strengthening principals' ability to identify promising teacher leaders.</p>

Distribute Leadership Schoolwide

Teacher leadership thrives in school environments where all staff members are empowered to lead and where structures exist that enable teachers to exercise their leadership.

THE CHALLENGE:

An unsupportive school culture can severely limit a teacher leader's work and effectiveness. Principals are responsible for creating a school culture conducive to teacher leadership and for ensuring teachers have time and space to collaborate. Even teachers who are ready to lead may struggle to exert their leadership if the prevailing school culture is at odds with their charge or when there are no existing systems teacher leaders can tap into to execute their work. For example, if the principal has not established structures for teachers to regularly work with colleagues to improve their practice, teachers may be uncomfortable giving and receiving critical feedback—a cornerstone of effective teacher leadership. On the other hand, when a principal establishes the expectation that everyone leads and clearly defines a variety of leadership roles and responsibilities, teachers can exercise their leadership and see that their work is supported by everyone in the building.

The local or state context can restrict authentic teacher leadership work and prevent principals from building a staff committed to teacher leadership. Even in schools committed to providing teacher leaders with real adult leadership experience, state and local policies can get in the way. Collectively bargained agreements often restrict the types of leadership activities teachers can take on without additional levels of certification, such as observing and providing feedback to peers. Such requirements can prevent teachers from gaining valuable adult leadership experience and engaging with their peers in meaningful professional conversations about their practice. In addition, local policies often prevent principals from being able to manage their staff,^{xvii} leaving them powerless to remove individuals who contribute to an ineffective school culture.

THE NEED:

Principals need training and support to create school environments in which staff members “lead from every seat.” Such a culture should be supported by structures and systems that feature a variety of clearly defined teacher leadership roles, promote peer collaboration that includes giving and receiving critical feedback, foster collegial conversations where data on teacher practice and student outcomes are central, and maintain a sharp focus on student success. Great principals cultivate leadership early and often—finding and creating opportunities for all staff to lead schoolwide projects, mentor and receive feedback from their peers, and engage in smaller acts of leadership each and every day.^{xxviii} All principals need to view talent management as a top priority that is deeply connected to their efforts to cultivate a school culture that supports the continuous improvement of teacher practice and student achievement alike.

Local and state policies need to be designed intentionally to support distributive leadership. Teachers need real instructional leadership practice, including opportunities to observe or coach other teachers. Local and state laws must enable, rather than impede, this important work. Principals also need authority to build an aligned staff, including, when necessary, the ability to dismiss individuals who do not meet schoolwide expectations for participating in collaborative structures and supporting teacher leadership.

After David O'Hara became the permanent principal of Leaders, more than half of the staff transitioned out of the school. Some teachers were simply burnt out, a reality that saddened O'Hara and motivated him to do better by his staff. Others simply weren't a good fit with the new direction of the school. Having tough conversations with teachers and counseling them out was hard for O'Hara, but the soft-spoken leader knew it was essential. “You can't keep someone around if they are toxic to your culture. It's bad for staff morale and, ultimately, it's bad for kids.” Once he had a strong, aligned staff in place, O'Hara concentrated on creating systems to support their work—a focus Assistant Principal O'Shea says is critical for operationalizing their vision for teacher leadership. All teachers meet weekly with grade-level or content-area teams or as a whole-school community. Over time, these weekly meetings have become increasingly driven by teacher-identified needs and led by teacher leaders with targeted support from O'Hara and O'Shea. Collaboration has always been the norm at Leaders, but the leadership team, which includes approximately one-third of teachers in a variety of clearly defined leadership roles, has made it more intentional and effective. In this environment, teacher leadership takes on many forms that reflect the unique skills and professional goals of each teacher leader. For example, Alex co-teaches multiple classes, is the 9th grade team leader, and serves as special education coordinator. Ray, the 11th and 12th grade science teacher, doesn't have a formal leadership title, though he nevertheless identifies as a leader: “I'm not on the leadership team yet. Right now, I lead by opening my classroom up to my peers.” O'Hara holds a deep respect for the power of community to promote shared values and inspire change—and he is acutely aware that he sets the tone for how everyone in the building interacts with one another. He is committed to using that fact to strengthen the school culture as a whole. “It's easy for me to go into a classroom four or six times and give an evaluation score,” O'Hara reflects. “It's not easy to build a culture where teachers can go into one another's classrooms to give and receive honest feedback. But it is so important.” Brandon, the 10th grade geometry teacher and math department facilitator, eagerly adds that “trust is really important, too. The first time you open your classroom to others, it's really scary and intense. But the non-evaluative feedback is so valuable, you just immediately get on board.”



Distribute Leadership Schoolwide

THE PRINCIPAL ROLE

A principal's most important responsibilities—leading instruction, managing talent, and making their schools a great place to work—create conditions where teachers can lead from every seat.

THE SOLUTIONS:

Policymakers at all levels of our education system can support principals in cultivating schools where leadership is distributed amongst all teachers serving in differentiated leadership roles.

LOCAL	STATE	FEDERAL
<p>Build Principals' Priority Skills: Provide tools, training, and support that enable principals to develop differentiated teacher leader roles aligned to school improvement strategies and to create systems and structures to support teacher leadership (<i>e.g.</i>, establishing professional learning communities, effective team meeting protocols, and leadership teams). Make connections between instructional leadership, talent management, and strategies for cultivating a school culture where everyone has opportunities to lead.</p> <p>Enhance Principals' Staffing Authority: Remove local policy barriers that prevent principals from hiring the right teachers for their school, promoting the best teachers into leadership positions, and, when needed, removing ineffective teachers.</p> <p>Remove Teacher Leadership Hurdles: Work with unions to remove any collective bargaining language that creates barriers preventing teachers from observing and providing feedback to one another. (<i>Note:</i> While districts should remove certain regulatory barriers, districts can also play a role in ensuring teachers are prepared to take on certain responsibilities. For example, districts could require teachers to demonstrate understanding of the observation rubric and evaluation protocols before conducting evaluative observations and they could offer local trainings to principals and their instructional leadership teams.)</p>	<p>Provide Guidance on Priority Leadership Standards: Develop guidance regarding the leadership standards where principals, with adequate support from their supervisors, should focus their time and attention—including talent management, and specifically leadership development, along with instructional leadership and culture building.</p> <p>Provide or Promote Staffing Authority for Principals: Remove state-level regulatory barriers that prevent principals from hiring the right teachers for their school, promoting the best teachers into leadership positions, and, when needed, removing ineffective teachers.</p> <p>Remove Teacher Leadership Hurdles: Remove regulatory barriers that prevent teachers from taking on additional leadership responsibilities, such as licensure requirements that prevent non-administrators from conducting observations. Provide districts with sample collective bargaining language to use in union negotiations. (<i>Note:</i> While states should remove certain regulatory barriers, states can also play a role in ensuring teachers are prepared to take on certain responsibilities. For example, in Colorado, anyone who conducts evaluative observations must hold an administrator license or complete a state-approved evaluation training program.)</p>	<p>Invest in Principals' Priority Skills: Use funds to support national nonprofit organizations that recruit, prepare, and support teachers and school leaders. Fund grantees that empower and enable principals to effectively distribute leadership across schools (<i>e.g.</i>, projects focused on strengthening current or aspiring principals' skills in managing talent and building strong school cultures to grow teacher leaders and create strong leadership teams).</p> <p>Promote Staffing Authority for Principals: Initiate a rulemaking process to provide priority and preference points in competitive grant competitions to entities that provide principals with staffing authority (<i>e.g.</i>, states or districts that break down existing central office barriers to provide principals with the authority to effectively hire, promote, and dismiss staff).</p> <p>Encourage the Removal of Teacher Leadership Hurdles: Initiate a rulemaking process to set the eligibility criteria for relevant grant competitions such that eligible entities must remove barriers to the development of teacher leaders. These barriers could include state or local laws or collectively bargained agreements that restrict certain leadership responsibilities teachers can take on without receiving additional levels of licensure.</p>

Provide High-Quality Leadership Training

Leadership, including teacher leadership, requires a set of skills that must be taught deliberately and practiced repeatedly in a real school setting with sufficient opportunities for feedback and reflection.

THE CHALLENGE:

Teacher leaders do not receive appropriate (or any) leadership training. Too often, teachers are thrust into leadership positions and expected to rely on their classroom experience to guide them. As a result, teacher leaders may default to their comfort zone—modeling instructional practices for individual teachers and validating teacher effort in order to maintain existing peer-to-peer relationships—rather than using leadership strategies to achieve even better outcomes for many more students.^{xix} At the same time, one-off or one-size-fits-all training sessions are not the solution. More than 90 percent of teachers participate in workshop-style professional development each school year^{xx} yet such training has not been found to positively affect student achievement.^{xxi} There is no indication that isolated, theory-based leadership training is any more useful: 96 percent of principals say their on-the-job experiences, including working directly with peers, are more valuable than classroom-based preparation programs.^{xxii}

THE NEED:

Teacher leaders need access to high-quality leadership training. While strong instructional skills are critical to the effectiveness of teacher leaders, the true promise of teacher leadership—leveraging great teachers to drive instructional improvement across classrooms—lies in their ability to lead. High-quality leadership training and support can take many forms: it may be part of a school’s internal professional development or it may be provided by the district or through an external provider (e.g., an institution of higher education or a nonprofit organization). Research indicates that adults learn best when they have regular opportunities to practice new concepts and skills in real-life settings.^{xxiii} For example, the 70-20-10 leadership development model—in which 70 percent of learning comes from challenging work-based assignments, 20 percent from coaches or mentors, and 10 percent from coursework or training—has been used effectively across sectors for many years.^{xxiv} Moreover, New Leaders experience confirms that leadership responsibilities should be built up incrementally and deliberately over time—scaffolding opportunities so teachers’ skills and responsibilities grow in tandem.^{xxv}

School-based teacher leadership development should include the following characteristics of effective job-embedded professional development:

- driven by data analyses of school, teacher, and student needs;
- multiple opportunities for teachers to learn, practice, receive feedback, and reflect on leadership concepts and skills;
- time, space, and other school structures that promote peer collaboration (e.g., leadership retreats and leadership team meetings); and
- strong session facilitation, including by school leaders or teacher leaders

Teacher leadership development provided by external partners, including universities or nonprofits, should include the following additional research-based elements:

- a defined competency framework for effective teacher leadership;
- proactive recruitment and rigorous selection;
- a research-based curriculum or scope and sequence;
- clinical or job-embedded practice (including the above characteristics);
- participant assessment in an authentic setting, including formative, summative, and self; and
- a commitment to program review and improvement.

Principal O’Hara and Assistant Principal O’Shea pride themselves on the numerous opportunities teachers at Leaders have to learn and grow from one another on a daily basis. The leadership team, however, needed additional space to learn about, discuss, and reflect on leadership concepts and practices. Over the summer, the team spent three days together in an Expeditionary Learning-style retreat (similar to annual student retreats) to immerse themselves in what it means to be a leader. O’Hara and O’Shea developed the sessions by borrowing content and ideas from leadership training they received through New Leaders’ Aspiring Principals Program. For example, the team completed a consultancy protocol to brainstorm solutions to a leadership challenge and they also learned about new leadership concepts (e.g., facilitative leadership and strategies for leading teams of adults). During the school year, teacher leaders have regular opportunities to connect their daily leadership work back to the retreat, including during bi-weekly leadership team meetings, which are also modeled after O’Hara and O’Shea’s principal preparation. Most of this leadership development occurs within existing structures that support teacher collaboration, allowing teacher leaders “to practice in a safe space where they know everyone in the room is bought in and assumes positive intentions,” O’Shea explains. Teacher leaders also value opportunities they have to learn and grow as part of larger communities, particularly the NYC Outward Bound network, where they can connect with and be reinvigorated by like-minded educators. O’Shea has an acute appreciation for such networks. She began her transition into school administration through New Leaders’ Emerging Leaders Program (ELP), a job-embedded and cohort-based leadership training program specifically for teachers, and found it incredibly valuable for her development. “ELP was a transformative experience,” says O’Shea. “I learned to identify and focus on my intentions and analyze how I’m actually coming across to others... I also learned adaptive leadership moves and how to ask probing questions,” skills and strategies she says she didn’t realize she lacked until she studied and practiced them deliberately through ELP. O’Shea also experienced the value of a cohort of teacher leaders supporting and holding one another accountable. And she saw the immediate effect one can have as a teacher leader—an experience that she is proud to replicate for the various teacher leaders she now supports.



Provide High-Quality Leadership Training

THE PRINCIPAL ROLE

Principals ensure teachers have access to high-quality leadership training and support: they lead school-based professional development, including creating opportunities for job-embedded leadership practice, and they can recommend or approve professional development offered by external providers.

THE SOLUTIONS:

Policymakers at all levels of our education system can support principals in providing teachers with appropriate, high-quality leadership development and support.

LOCAL

Identify Strong Partners: Work with institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations to develop new teacher leadership training programs that include research-based programmatic elements or partner with such high-quality programs where they already exist. Encourage—but do not require—principals to partner with pre-screened programs to meet their school’s leadership professional development needs.

Provide Ongoing Support: Provide support and mentoring for principals who are incorporating leadership development into school-based professional development and extend that support to teacher leaders who hold similar responsibilities across the district. This can be accomplished by strengthening the support provided through existing positions (*e.g.*, principal supervisors) or by investing in new district-level positions (*e.g.*, coaches focused on supporting teacher leaders).

Foster Communities of Practice: Convene principals and teacher leaders from across the district regularly to observe one another, share best practices, problem solve, and collaborate. These regular convenings could be specific to each role or they could include principals and teacher leaders and include time for instructional leadership teams to collaborate and learn together.

STATE

Encourage Leadership Development: In awarding Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title II-A subgrants to districts, encourage localities to use funds for leadership development activities for principals and teachers.

Identify Strong Programs: Use the ESEA Title II-A state set-aside to advance teacher leader development (*e.g.*, by launching a competition to identify high-quality providers to deliver leadership training to teacher leaders or instructional leadership teams in select districts or schools across the state).

Invest in Learning & Prioritize Equity: Pilot or launch a research-based teacher leadership program in schools or districts most in need of great teaching and leading (*e.g.*, federal priority or focus schools, schools or districts serving large populations of high-need students, or schools or districts with high staff turnover rates or in hard-to-staff locales). Include funding for an implementation study to understand the program’s effect on teacher leaders.

Provide Guidance on Priority Leadership Standards: Develop guidance on the leadership standards where principals, with adequate support from their supervisors, should focus their time and attention—making sure to include instructional leadership and talent management, both of which are critical to the creation of effective and appropriate school-level professional development, at the top of that list.

FEDERAL

Promote the Use of Existing Federal Funds for Leadership: Through guidance, make clear that ESEA Title II-A funds can be used for leadership activities, including for teacher leadership development and training for principals and their instructional leadership teams.

Invest in Research-Based Teacher Leader Development: Use funds to support states and districts with cutting-edge, evidence-based strategies to improve teacher leader training and support.

Promote More Effective Uses of Educator Professional Development Funds: Provide technical assistance on how states can use the current statutory authority to focus district use of ESEA Title II-A funds on activities, including teacher leader training, that have been shown through scientifically based research to improve student achievement.

Prioritize Equity: Use the new supplemental priorities and definitions (Priority 4—Serving High-Need Students) to target discretionary funds to teacher leadership development projects focused on serving students and communities most in need.

Set Teacher Leader Goals for Growth & Results

Teacher leaders are most effective when they are supported in setting and working toward appropriate leadership goals and growing professionally as both teachers and leaders.

THE CHALLENGE:

Performance expectations and related support for teacher leaders remains focused on their teaching and disconnected from their leading. To inform the support they provide teachers, principals typically work with teachers to analyze data, develop classroom-level goals, and observe and provide feedback on their instructional practice. Without conducting similar data analyses, goal-setting, and observations that reflect teacher leaders' work with colleagues across multiple classrooms, principals can fail to provide teacher leaders with the support they need to achieve leadership outcomes and continuously grow as leaders. Moreover, without that guidance and support, teacher leaders can struggle to plan and execute their work in ways that reflect strong leadership practice—and they can be left feeling ineffectual or unsure about the value of their leadership work or steps they can take to continue building leadership skills.

State and local evaluation and support systems were not designed, nor are most ready, to account for teacher leadership. States and districts continue to wrestle with implementing evaluations and basic support for teachers and principals. Even where clear local or state teacher leadership frameworks do exist, one-size-fits-all roles and performance expectations are not the solution; district-defined positions have been found to be ineffective when they don't take into account the school context and priorities^{xxvi} or individual teacher strengths, interests, and needs.

THE NEED:

Teacher leaders need clear goals that are appropriate for their position. Principals need to work with teacher leaders to establish team- or school-level goals that reflect the intended scope of influence for differentiated teacher leader roles.

Principals need to be prepared and supported to manage teacher leader development. Principals are uniquely positioned to provide teacher leaders with the guidance and support they need to thrive, including helping them clearly define their roles; establish appropriate and rigorous goals aligned to school improvement priorities; develop, analyze, and reflect on leadership strategies; assess their leadership strengths and growth areas; and, overall, determine their effectiveness as leaders in ways that are appropriate to their role. The entire principal effectiveness continuum—including leadership standards, preparation, licensure, hiring, evaluation, management, and support from principal supervisors—needs to reflect a principal's responsibility for building effective leadership teams and cultivating teacher leadership.

States and districts need to invest thoughtfully in teacher leadership.

As system-level leaders continue to build ever more coherent human capital management systems—including developing teacher career pathways and leadership pipelines—they must recognize that principals need to be able to develop and support teacher leaders in differentiated roles appropriate to their school's context and priorities as well as individual teacher strengths, interests, and needs. Educators need research-based guidance, robust system-level supports, and appropriate flexibility to pilot teacher leadership—not untested new requirements misaligned with school improvement priorities.

As a grantee of the Progressive Redesign Opportunity Schools for Excellence (PROSE) program offered by the New York City Department of Education, Principal O'Hara and his leadership team are aiming to revolutionize teacher development. Teacher evaluation and support at Leaders is now a portfolio- and performance-based process (similar to the school's approach to student assessment) that was designed to support the school's vision for teacher leadership. There are four primary components: (1) a goal-setting process that is led by teachers with support from Principal O'Hara and Assistant Principal O'Shea and that includes developing individual learning objectives related to instruction and, for some, leadership; (2) observations, including two conducted by the school leaders and two to four peer observations conducted through a structured classroom "intervisitation" protocol; (3) a portfolio that enables teachers to gather evidence of their progress toward goals and learning objectives, which can include evidence of their leadership work and results; and (4) a structured review during which teachers present in front of their peers and administrators and discuss their growth areas, strengths, and next steps, including as both teachers and, where appropriate, leaders. Also used for accountability purposes (*i.e.*, a summative evaluation from O'Hara), this learning-focused, teacher-led process has resulted in a much higher level of engagement from individual teachers in their own goals and much stronger collective buy-in from the staff community as a whole. "When teachers drive their own learning, they are more invested," says O'Hara. "Our new process provides more opportunity for reflection and for teachers to be vulnerable—something that is often missing from evaluations yet is so important for growth." Moreover, the innovative construct enables teacher leaders to both give and receive regular, formal feedback on their leadership practice through a single, comprehensive process. The coherent system recognizes the need for teacher leaders to establish goals and learning objectives specific to their role and individual needs—enabling them to receive the recognition and support they need to grow as both teachers and leaders.



Set Teacher Leader Goals for Growth & Results

THE PRINCIPAL ROLE

Principals are talent managers responsible for helping teacher leaders set the right goals, get immediate results, and continuously improve their leadership practice.

THE SOLUTIONS:

Policymakers at all levels of our education system can help principals effectively manage and support teacher leaders for growth and results.

LOCAL	STATE	FEDERAL
<p>Promote Effective Teacher Leadership Goals: Develop sample teacher leader goals or make available exemplars that can be used to support teacher leaders. Consider creating additional resources or guidance to support principals and teacher leaders in developing appropriate teacher leadership goals that are aligned to school improvement goals and priorities (<i>e.g.</i>, student learning objectives (SLOs) for multiple supported classrooms that are aligned to the school's Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs)).</p> <p>Invest in Principal Supervisors: Ensure principal supervisors are equipped to support and hold principals accountable for the effectiveness of their teachers and teacher leaders, including ensuring teacher leader roles are designed for maximum effect and teacher leaders are well-supported in reaching leadership goals.</p> <p>Promote Innovation & Prioritize Equity: Invite schools to submit plans to pilot innovative approaches to teacher leader evaluation and support. Consider the pros and cons of opening such a competition up to all schools in the district or targeting to schools that could particularly benefit from such flexibility (<i>e.g.</i>, federal priority or focus schools, schools serving large populations of high-need students, or schools with high staff turnover rates).</p>	<p>Invest in Shared Accountability: Invite districts to pilot an evaluation and support system that requires teachers, teacher leaders, and principals to push for the same outcomes. Ensure there is adequate funding to provide training to principal supervisors on how to support principals in taking responsibility for the effectiveness of teachers and other school-based leaders as well as related supports for teachers and teacher leaders. Include funding for an implementation study to capture lessons to inform future policies related to building more coherent evaluation and support systems for all school-based personnel.</p> <p>Prioritize Equity: Consider launching the evaluation and support pilot described above in schools or districts that could particularly benefit from such innovation (<i>e.g.</i>, federal priority or focus schools, schools or districts serving large populations of high-need students, or schools or districts with high staff turnover rates or in hard-to-staff locales).</p> <p>Remove Barriers & Incent Innovation: Remove barriers that prevent districts with strong plans from developing or supporting innovative, evidenced-based approaches to educator evaluation and support. Where flexibility already exists, ensure stakeholders are aware of their options. Provide guidance or a menu of examples that illustrate how districts have innovated while meeting existing state requirements.</p>	<p>Promote and Invest in Shared Accountability: Use funds to support states and districts with cutting-edge, evidence-based plans for more coherent approaches to the evaluation and support of teachers and leaders. For example, encourage evaluation and support system parameters that focus teachers, teacher leaders, and principals on pushing for the same outcomes (<i>e.g.</i>, SLOs for the multiple classrooms teacher leaders support that are aligned to the school's AMOs).</p> <p>Invest in Research-Backed Resources: Use funds to support the development of high-quality, open-source tools for assessing teacher leader practice (<i>e.g.</i>, 360° survey instruments, observational tools, and online assessment instruments) and outcome measures (<i>e.g.</i>, valid and consistent student growth measures).</p>

Allocate School Resources for Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership pushes us to fundamentally rethink the way schools are structured and the way they operate, including the school schedule and use of funds.

THE CHALLENGE:

Leadership opportunities are added on top of teachers' existing responsibilities, requiring that educators spend time outside of the formal work day on leadership responsibilities. When American teachers spend more hours in the classroom than teachers in any other OECD country,^{xxvii} structuring leadership as an add-on is a surefire recipe for ineffectiveness and burnout. Yet principals often don't have the flexibility they need to create school schedules that provide teachers with dedicated time to collaborate with colleagues and plan or execute against leadership work without taking away from already limited instructional planning periods.

Funding is inadequate or inflexible. Costs for large-scale teacher leadership initiatives can be significant. Even on a smaller scale, compensating teachers for additional work and responsibility requires dedicated funding. While additional dollars would help, it's also true that existing funds are not always used as effectively as they could be. Most state and district salary structures promote lockstep compensation based on years of experience and degree attainment rather than on effectiveness or for taking on additional responsibilities. In addition, principals continue to lack budget authority that could enable them to implement teacher leadership to meet their school's needs and recognize and reward teacher leaders for their work and results. For example, principals often face requirements that funds be spent on specific activities (e.g., a \$20,000 budget line item for unneeded textbooks).^{xxviii}

THE NEED:

Teacher leaders need time dedicated to leadership work—not simply built on top of other responsibilities—and principals need flexibility to create supportive schedules and systems. Principals need to create school schedules and other systems and structures that provide teacher leaders with time to plan and execute their leadership work. This flexibility includes providing sufficient time for work and collaboration during the regular school day (e.g., by providing additional planning periods) as well as during non-student periods or days (e.g., by restructuring the weekly or annual schedule to provide more time for team meetings and in-school professional development).

Principals and teacher leaders need investments in leadership and principals need appropriate budget flexibility. During a time when educators are being asked to do more with less, investments in leadership are a smart investment to improve schools. We need to do more to incent great teachers to remain in classrooms and schools, including revamping compensation structures to recognize and reward teachers who take on additional leadership responsibilities. Moreover, principals need more control over their school budget so they can invest in school-specific strategies to support teacher leadership (e.g., stipends for teacher leaders, compensation for leadership work that must occur outside the regular school day or year, and other costs related to training and supporting teacher leaders).

Principal O'Hara and Assistant Principal O'Shea have structured the school day and week to support teacher leadership. By adding time to the school day on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, teachers are able to spend a half-day every Wednesday in team meetings, collaborating with colleagues, and problem-solving together through ongoing inquiry cycles. Teacher leaders manage many aspects of these weekly meetings with support from O'Hara and O'Shea: they co-develop agendas, facilitate meetings, and coordinate follow up. Moreover, two teacher leaders have an extra planning period each day for leadership work. "David is really amazing at helping me think about how we operationalize our vision," says O'Shea. "He's always asking me, 'What's the structure? What's the system to support that work?' Our schedule is a great example of that." The leadership team at Leaders is quick to point out there is no single solution to the challenge of finding time for teacher leadership. "The extra prep period I have to prepare for meetings and do other leadership work is really valuable," says Alex, teacher leader and special education coordinator. For Kevin, the 10th grade team lead, the opposite is true: "If I had to take significant time out of the classroom and away from kids to do leadership work, I would be less inclined to sign up." Making time for teacher leadership requires supportive schoolwide structures and personalized, clearly defined roles and responsibilities. In addition, O'Hara has to make tough decisions about where to allocate school resources to support teacher leadership. Yet a running joke among staff is that O'Hara supplements the school budget using unscrupulous tactics. "I love that my teachers think I rob banks on the weekend. That tells me they see our money being spent on the things that matter most," says O'Hara. "The truth is: we don't have enough money to do everything we need to do for our kids. Most people who visit Leaders have never seen my office—it's not very nice. We don't use our money for new furniture. It's reserved for our priorities, including teachers and their development." Once again, teacher leaders acknowledge that new strategies to support teacher leadership, especially financial incentives, must be done with care. "Earning more money for being a teacher leader can be awkward in a historically flat profession," Rachel, who receives a salary bump for her leadership work, delicately shares. "It's not a problem here, but that definitely isn't the case in all schools." All of the teacher leaders at Leaders are motivated by a desire to improve their school and do right by their students. That being said, the extra money is nice, they acknowledge. *Really nice.*



Allocate School Resources for Teacher Leadership

THE PRINCIPAL ROLE

Principals are responsible for managing school schedules and budgets, including making tough decisions about where to invest limited resources. They can better deploy time and money to support teacher leadership when they are provided with appropriate flexibility and, where possible, additional resources.

THE SOLUTIONS:

Policymakers at all levels of our education system can support principals in providing and aligning school resources to support teacher leadership.

LOCAL

Create Incentives for Teacher Leadership: Provide competitive financial incentives for teachers to take on leadership responsibilities (*i.e.*, provide salary increases or stipends for teachers who take on leadership roles).

Create Incentives to Expand Equity: Provide even more competitive financial incentives (*e.g.*, salary increases or stipends) to teachers ready to lead for taking positions in high-need schools or to teachers who take on additional leadership responsibilities in high-need schools. Provide similarly competitive incentives for leaders who take positions in high-need schools and achieve stronger retention of effective teachers.

Provide Balanced Autonomy: Give principals authority to create school schedules that provide teachers with time to collaborate and lead. Ideally, this authority should include autonomy to align the budget with school improvement goals and strategies, including paying for costs associated with teacher leadership, rather than tying funds to specific activities or positions that are misaligned with the school's strategic priorities. Balanced autonomy can also be used specifically as an incentive to get great leaders into hard-to-staff schools (*e.g.*, by granting effective turnaround leaders with flexibility in exchange for a commitment to stay at the school for a defined period of time and meet improvement targets).

STATE

Promote Teacher Leadership: Provide models of career pathways and differentiated compensation systems that reward effective teachers who remain in the classroom and take on additional responsibilities. Such models can provide additional compensation to teachers with a record of raising student achievement in exchange for expanding their reach to lead teachers within their buildings.

Promote Equity: Develop innovative compensation systems that reward excellent teachers and leaders for serving in high-need schools (*e.g.*, federal priority or focus schools, schools or districts serving large populations of high-need students, or schools or districts with high staff turnover or in hard-to-staff locales). For example, provide financial incentives to encourage effective teachers and leaders to move to high-need schools and stay there for defined periods of time (modeled after the Talent Transfer Initiative) or other research-supported strategies.

Promote More Effective Use of Funds: Instead of requiring strict adherence to funding formulas and mechanisms that dictate school-level staffing configurations, offer districts and school leaders more flexibility to use innovative staffing methods while also freeing up money previously tied to specific materials, positions, or activities that were misaligned with the school's strategic priorities.

FEDERAL

Invest in Leadership & Equity: Ensure that relevant federal competitive grants designed to improve human capital systems consider leadership in a meaningful way. Use the new supplemental priorities and definitions to target discretionary funds to projects focused on teacher leadership as a career pathway for teachers (Priority 9—Improving Teacher Effectiveness and Promoting Equitable Access to Effective Teachers) and a pipeline to the principalship (Priority 10—Improving the Effectiveness of Principals); also use the priorities to target discretionary funds to projects that serve the students most in need (Priority 4—Serving High-Need Students). Continue using the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program set-aside to support the Turnaround School Leaders program.

Promote Balanced Autonomy: Provide priority for grantees in various state- or district-level competitions that thoughtfully remove barriers to balanced principal autonomy in order to be eligible (*e.g.*, providing principals with appropriate authority over the school budget and schedule). Retain such requirements where they already exist (*e.g.*, the Turnaround School Leaders program).

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NATIONAL OFFICE

New Leaders
30 West 26th Street
New York, NY 10010
646-792-1070

WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE

New Leaders
1003 K Street NW, Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20001
202-379-2817

POLICY TEAM

policyteam@newleaders.org

WWW.NEWLEADERS.ORG