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Abstract

This working paper summarizes the results of a study of leadership in elementary and secondary schools. The study focused in particular on instructional leadership – the extent to which school leaders focus on the core activities of teaching and learning – and teacher leadership – the extent to which teachers have input into school decision-making. This paper is drawn from the full report of the study, entitled *School Leadership Counts* (Ingersoll, Dougherty and Sirinides 2017), available at www.newteachercenter.org.

Disciplines
Education

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Consortium for Policy Research in Education

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ABSTRACT

This working paper summarizes the results of a study of leadership in elementary and secondary schools. The study focused in particular on instructional leadership – the extent to which school leaders focus on the core activities of teaching and learning – and teacher leadership – the extent to which teachers have input into school decision-making. This paper is drawn from the full report of the study, entitled *School Leadership Counts* (Ingersoll, Dougherty and Sirinides 2017), available at www.newteachercenter.org. The study addresses four related research questions:

- What are the levels of instructional leadership in schools?
- What is the relationship between instructional leadership and student achievement?
- What is the role of teachers in school leadership?
- What is the relationship between teacher leadership and student achievement?

The source of data for this study was the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning Survey (TELL), a large-scale survey administered by the New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz, CA (New Teacher Center, 2013). The TELL Survey collects data from teachers on an unusually wide range of measures of teaching and organizational conditions in schools and also obtains school-level data on student academic achievement. TELL is also an unusually large survey; for this study we statistically analyzed data from nearly 900,000 teachers, in about 25,000 public schools, in 16 states, collected between 2011 to 2015. As a result of its size, depth and breadth, the TELL survey database is one of the most comprehensive and detailed sources of information on school leadership and school performance in the nation and especially useful for this study. Our study focused on the TELL Survey's data on 11 key elements of instructional leadership in schools and the survey's data on eight key areas of teacher leadership and decision-making in schools.

The analysis generated five key findings:

1. Schools with higher levels of both instructional leadership and teacher leadership have greater student achievement.

2. Those specific elements of instructional leadership that are most strongly related to student achievement are: (1) Holding teachers to high professional standards for delivering instruction; (2) Providing an effective school improvement team; and (3) Fostering a shared vision for the school.

3. Those specific areas of teacher leadership and teacher decisionmaking that are most strongly related to student achievement are: (1) establishing student discipline procedures and policies; and (2) school improvement planning.

4. Schools often do not emphasize those elements of instructional leadership and areas of teacher leadership that are most strongly related to student achievement.

5. High-poverty schools often have lower levels of both instructional leadership and teacher leadership, which could put their students at an academic disadvantage.

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Introduction

It is almost universally recognized that how schools are organized and managed—the realm of school leadership—is crucial for the success of students and the performance of schools (for a review, see Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Moreover, school officials and reformers have long held that the key to successful leadership in elementary and secondary schools is to make the core activities of teaching and learning the primary focus of those making the decisions and managing schools (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Indeed, what is often called "instructional leadership" has been the equivalent of the "Holy Grail" in the management and administration of elementary and secondary schools (Elmore, 2000). In this view, effective schools almost invariably emphasize key elements of instructional leadership, such as: developing a shared purpose and vision among faculty and administrators in schools; fostering an atmosphere of trust, respect and teamwork in the building; promoting high and consistent academic standards; providing objective, consistent, and useful assessment of the quality of teachers and teaching; using evidence and data to make decisions about the instructional program; and providing support for, and recognition of, teachers (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; May, Huff, & Goldring, 2012; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010).

Focusing on teaching and learning may seem an obvious and straightforward objective for school leaders, but to many school critics a central failing of school leadership has been that direct involvement in instruction has been among the least frequent activities performed by school leaders of any kind and at any level. Such critics hold that the lion's share of leadership time and energy typically has focused on myriad other managerial issues, such as school facilities, regulations, budgets, scheduling, hiring, community affairs, and parental relations, rather than the core mission of schools—that is, teaching and learning (Elmore, 2000; Goff, Goldring, Guthrie, & Bickman, 2014).

Along with how closely schools focus on teaching and learning, a second concern often arises in relation to school leadership: who or which groups should have a role in the decision-making in schools. Historically, a hierarchical model similar to that widely used in industry was adopted by the school system (Tyack, 1974). At the school level, the norm over the past century has been that principals and administrators are, and should be, the main decision-makers when it comes to school-level issues. But a long-standing aspiration of many school reformers has been to grant teachers an important role in the leadership and decision-making within schools, especially beyond the classroom (for

examples and reviews, see McNeil, 1988; Johnson, 1990; Conley, 1991; Sizer, 1992; Grant & Murray, 1999; Ingersoll, 2003). This perspective of school reform has come and gone under different banners, including school-based management, teacher empowerment, site-based decision-making, and distributed leadership. Regardless of the label, the common theme has been to give more "voice," autonomy, and authority to school faculty, and to allow and encourage teachers to have input into decisions on key issues in their schools that impact their teaching and work.

Wielding authority in organizational decision-making is one of the classic hallmarks of the established and traditional professions, such as law, medicine, dentistry, university professors, and engineering (Freidson, 1986; Hodson & Sullivan, 1995). When it comes to organizational decisions about their work, members of such traditional professions usually have levels of workplace authority and autonomy approaching that of senior management. For example, professors often have equal or greater control than university administrators over the content of their teaching or research, the hiring of new colleagues, and, through the institution of peer review, the evaluation and promotion of members. As a result, academics are able to influence the ongoing content and character of their profession. Following this model, reformers seeking to enhance the professional standing and status of elementary and secondary teaching usually make increased teacher authority a key part of their initiatives (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011).

In recent years, efforts to increase the decision-making influence of teachers in schools have increasingly come under the banner of "teacher leadership" (Leading Educators, 2015; Pennington, 2013). A growing number of states have enacted policies directing that public schools develop school-level leadership mechanisms, often called school improvement teams or school councils. The objective of these initiatives is to foster collective and shared decision-making among key stakeholders in schools, especially principals and faculty. Often such policies explicitly mandate that school teams and councils wield real authority over key decisions rather than simply serve in an advisory role.

A further development in teacher leadership and teacher professionalization is the small but growing number of "teacher-powered" schools—schools that are collectively designed and led by teachers (Berry, Byrd, & Wieder, 2013; Farris-Berg & Dirkswager, 2013; Hawkins, 2009; Kolderie, 2008, 2014). Such schools are often explicitly modeled after the kind of partnerships that are common among white-collar vocations, such as lawyers, accountants, architects, auditors, and engineers, where the partners, as professionals, own, run, and are accountable for the success of the firm.

Given the prominence of both instructional and teacher leadership in the realms of school reform and policy, not surprisingly, both have also been the focus of extensive empirical research. But there have been limits to this research. It is, for example, unclear which of the many key elements of instructional leadership are more or less likely to be adopted in schools across the nation. Similarly, it is unclear which of these elements are more or less beneficial for the performance of schools and for enhancing student learning and growth (May, Huff, & Goldring, 2012). Likewise, though the extent of teacher involvement in school decision-making has been widely studied, there has been almost no solid empirical research on whether teacher leadership is beneficial for student learning and growth (Ingersoll, 2003). These topics are the subject of this study.

The Study

Our study seeks to address four related research questions:

- What are the levels of instructional leadership in schools?
- What is the relationship between instructional leadership and student achievement?
- What is the role of teachers in school leadership?
- What is the relationship between teacher leadership and student achievement?

The source of data for this study is the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Survey, a unique, large-scale survey administered by the New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz, CA (New Teacher Center, 2013). The TELL Survey collects data from teachers on an unusually wide range of measures of teaching and organizational conditions in schools and also obtains school-level data on student academic achievement. For this study we analyzed data from almost 900,000 teachers, in about 25,000 public schools, in 16 states, collected from 2011 to 2015. Even though the TELL survey does not use random sampling and so cannot be assumed to be representative of all schools across the nation, it is an unusually large survey sample and closely resembles the overall public school population across the nation. The size of the TELL database, along with its combination of data on student achievement and rich data on school conditions make it especially useful to address our research questions.

Our study focuses on the TELL Survey's set of questions on 11 key elements of effective instructional leadership,

including whether teachers can raise concerns that are important to them; whether there is an atmosphere of trust in school; whether leaders support teachers; whether there is a shared vision for the school; whether there is an effective school improvement team; whether faculty are recognized for accomplishments; whether teachers get effective feedback; whether teacher evaluation is objective, consistent, and helpful; whether school leadership facilitates data use to improve learning; and whether teachers are held to high standards. These questionnaire items used a four-point scale (i.e., strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree).

We also focus on the TELL Survey's set of questions regarding the role of teachers in eight key areas of decision-making and teacher leadership in schools: selecting instructional materials and resources; devising teaching techniques; setting grading and student assessment practices; determining the content of in-service professional development programs; establishing student discipline procedures; providing input on how the school budget will be spent; selecting and hiring new teachers; and school improvement planning. These questionnaire items used a four-point scale as well (i.e., none, small, moderate, and large).

TELL was designed to focus on schools as a whole and to gather data on the overall characteristics, conditions and performance of schools. Hence, we aggregated the responses of the individual teacher-respondents in order to create school-level mean scores of school conditions.

Our student achievement measure is the school's student proficiency ranking within its state. More specifically, our outcome measure is a percentile ranking, from 1 percent to 100 percent, of each school according to its percentage of students scoring at a proficient level, compared to all other schools in the state, in that year, for state tests in both mathematics and English/language arts (ELA).

We used basic descriptive statistical analysis techniques to assess levels and variations of instructional leadership and teacher leadership across schools and more advanced statistical techniques to assess the relationship between schools' student academic proficiency and both their instructional leadership and teacher leadership. It is important to note that the relationships we found between the leadership and student proficiency outcome represent statistical associations between measures and do not imply causality.

The Findings

Instructional Leadership

The TELL data show that schools vary dramatically in which elements of instructional leadership they emphasize and implement. For example, in over 90 percent of the schools the faculty "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that "teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction." On the other hand, in less than half of the schools did "teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them" (see Figure 1).

Moreover, these variations across elements were more marked when we focused solely on schools in which faculty reported they "Strongly Agree," that is, in which the faculty reported the highest level for an element of instructional leadership. For instance, while in 50 percent of schools the faculty on average reported they "Agree" with the statement that "the school improvement team provides effective leadership at this school," in only about 8 percent of schools did faculty report that they "Strongly Agree" with this statement. In comparison, in a third of schools faculty reported they "Strongly Agree" that teachers are held to high standards.

In general, the data indicate that schools are more likely to implement those elements of instructional leadership that are aligned with enhancing high standards, teacher accountability, evaluation, and performance. In contrast, the data indicate that schools are less likely to emphasize those elements of instructional leadership that entail recognition of, and support for, teachers and that are aligned with enhancing teacher "voice" and input into decision-

Figure 1: Levels of Instructional Leadership

(Percent of schools in which faculty on average "**Agree**" and "**Strongly Agree**" with selected statements regarding elements of their school's instructional leadership)

Element	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall Average Instructional Leadership	53	8.4
Teachers Can Raise Concerns	35.9	7.2
Atmosphere of Trust in School	37.9	8.9
Leaders Support Teachers	45	11.5
Faculty and Leaders Share Vision	48.1	8.5
School Improvement Team is Effective	50	7.6
Faculty Recognized for Accomplishments	49.7	10
Teachers Get Effective Feedback	53.8	10.8
Teacher Evaluation is Consistent	55.1	11.4
Teacher Evaluation is Objective	59.9	12.7
Leaders Facilitate Data Use	58	33.2
Teachers Held to High Standards	60.5	33

Percent that ■ **Agree** and ■ **Strongly Agree**

Figure 2: Instructional Leadership and Student Achievement

(Percentile ranking of schools' "Student Proficiency," by the overall level of instructional leadership, after controlling for school characteristics)
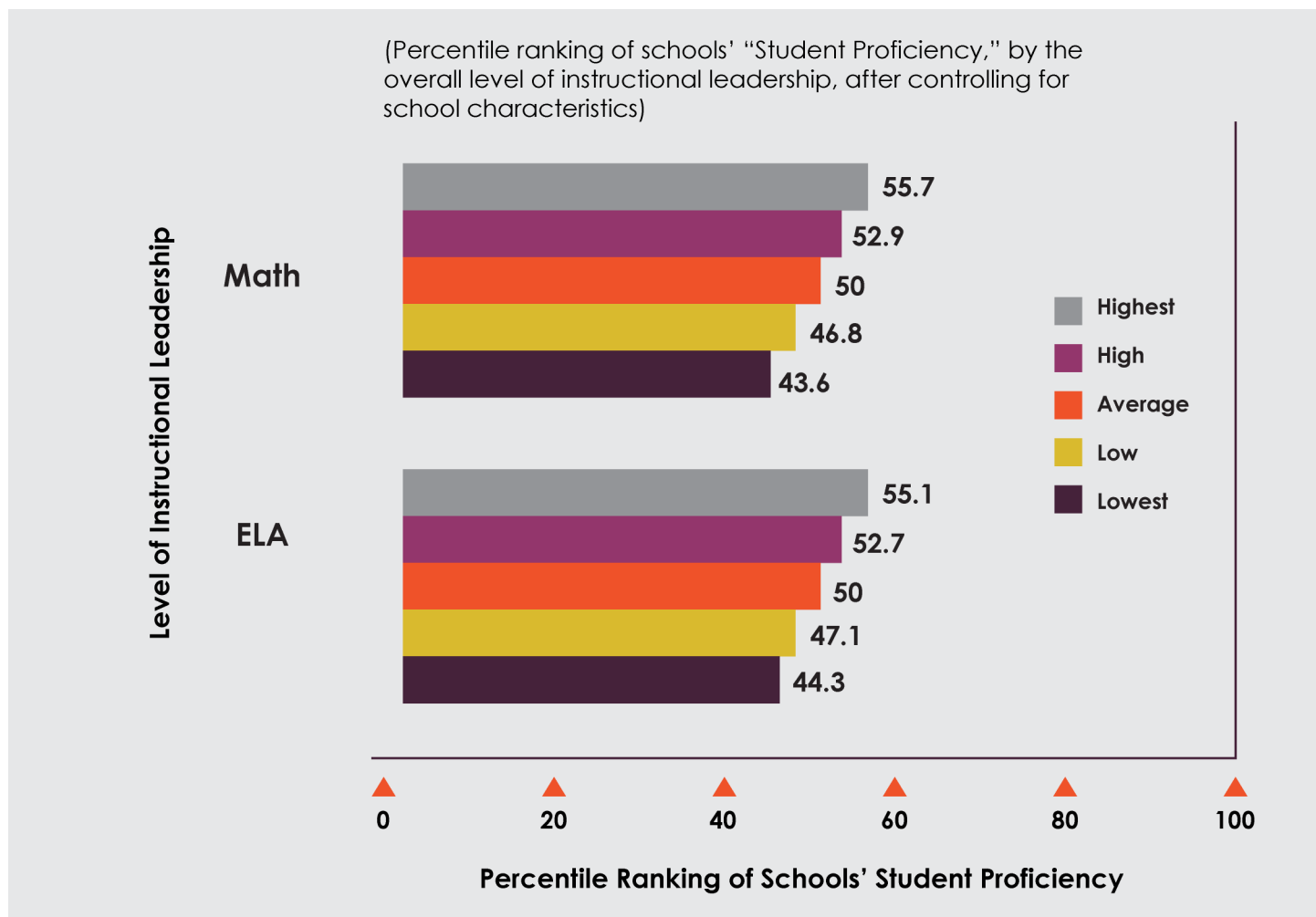
making.

In addition, the data also reveal dramatic differences in levels of instructional leadership across different types of schools. School poverty level was a key factor. In nine of the 11 elements of instructional leadership, faculty in high-poverty schools rated their school's instructional leadership lower than did faculty in low-poverty schools. For instance, in less than half of the high-poverty schools did faculty report that the school's leadership consistently supports teachers. In contrast, this was true of about 60 percent of low-poverty schools. The instructional leadership gap was larger (38% to 50%) regarding whether there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in the school. In only 38% of high-poverty schools did the faculty agree there was any such atmosphere.

Not only do schools vary in the extent to which they

implement key elements of instructional leadership, but the data also show that this is related to differences in how well their students perform on state achievement tests. The results of our advanced statistical analyses clearly show that instructional leadership is independently and significantly related to student achievement, after controlling for the background characteristics of schools, and this is so for both mathematics and ELA.

To illustrate the magnitude of the association between achievement and instructional leadership, we estimated predicted percentile rankings of proficiency by entering a range of values for the average overall measure of instructional leadership, while holding the measures of school characteristics constant at the sample mean. We set the instructional leadership measure to values corresponding to the 10th percentile, the 25th percentile, the mean, the 75th

Figure 3: Imbalance in Instructional Leadership Implementation
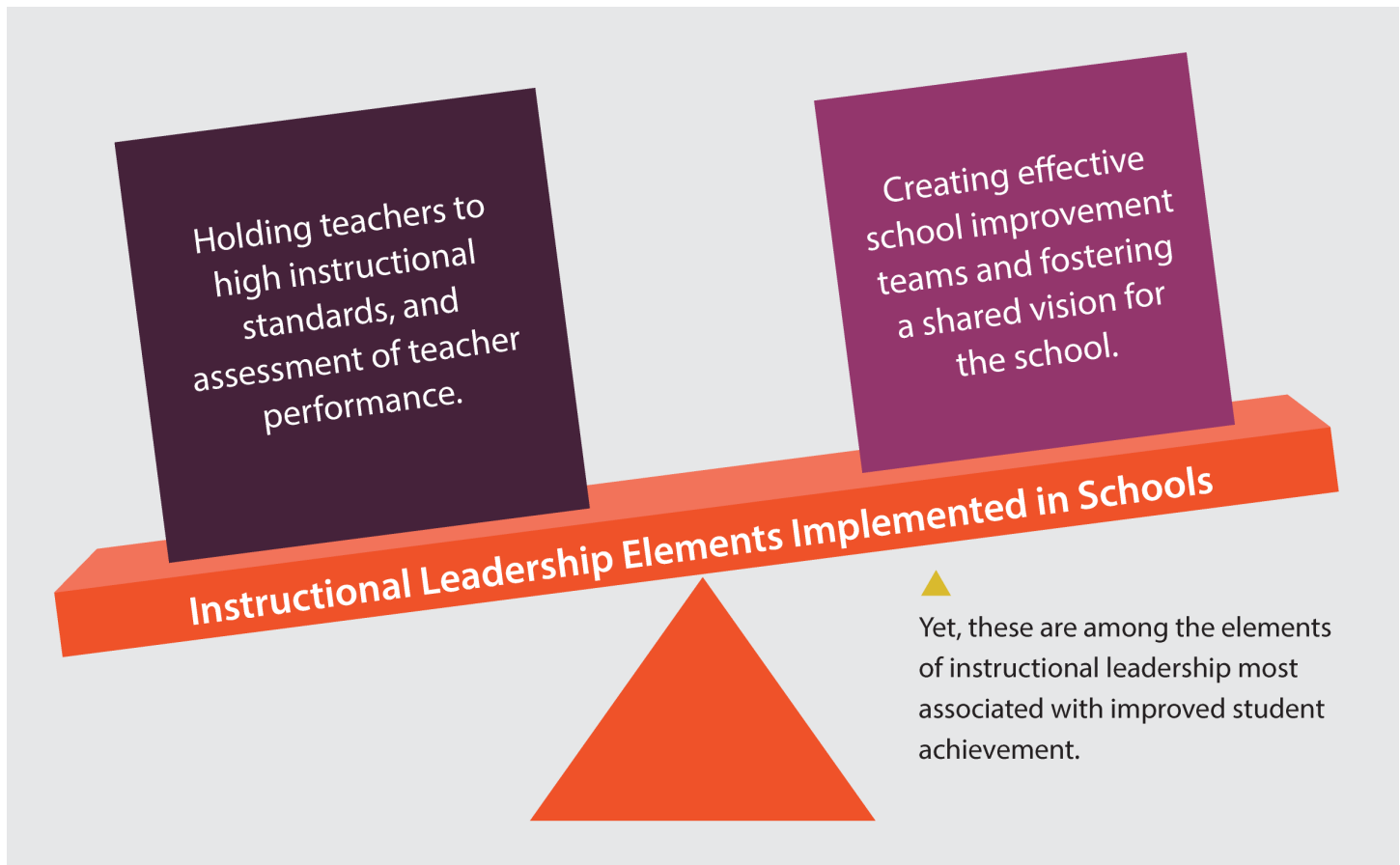
percentile, and the 90th percentile for the sample. This allowed us to predict student proficiency for a range of hypothetical schools, beginning with those that have the lowest level of instructional leadership (i.e., at the 10th percentile on the overall measure) and concluding with those that have the highest level of instructional leadership (i.e., at the 90th percentile on the overall measure). Figure 2 shows these predicted percentile rankings for both mathematics and ELA, for the different levels of leadership. As illustrated, a school with a highest overall level of instructional leadership, on average, is ranked at the 56th percentile in both mathematics proficiency and in ELA proficiency in its state. In contrast, a school with a lowest level of instructional leadership, on average, is ranked at the 45th percentile in both mathematics proficiency and in ELA proficiency.
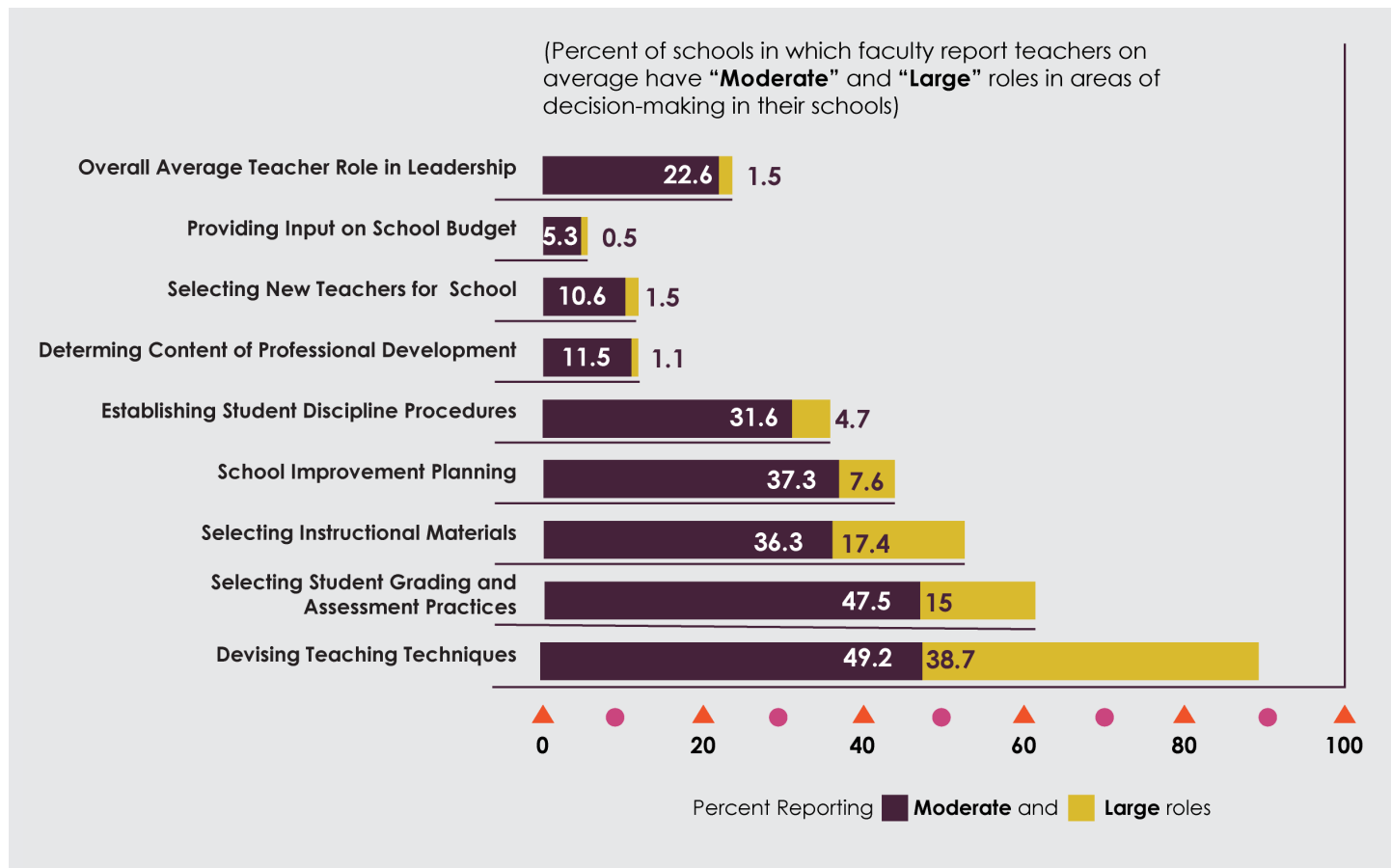
We also found the relationship between instructional leadership and student achievement to hold up across a variety of different types of schools. That is, while schools vary in their levels of instructional leadership, regardless of the type of school, improvements in

instructional leadership are strongly associated with improvements in student achievement.

Our statistical analyses also show that some elements of instructional leadership have a stronger relationship with student achievement than others. Those elements with the strongest relationships to achievement are: (a.) holding teachers to high instructional standards, (b.) providing an effective school improvement team, and (c.) fostering a shared vision for the school. For instance, for every unit difference (on the four-unit scale) in the degree to which teachers are held to high instructional standards, there is a 21-percentile difference in the school's ranking in mathematics.

But the data also reveal that many schools lag in those elements of instructional leadership that have the strongest relationship to student achievement. For instance, in only a minority of schools did faculty strongly agree that there is a shared vision (8.5%), or an effective school improvement team (7.6%), yet these elements have among the strongest ties to student achievement. On the other hand, the data

Figure 4: The Role of Teachers in School Leadership

(Percent of schools in which faculty report teachers on average have **"Moderate"** and **"Large"** roles in areas of decision-making in their schools)

Category	Moderate	Large
Overall Average Teacher Role in Leadership	22.6	1.5
Providing Input on School Budget	5.3	0.5
Selecting New Teachers for School	10.6	1.5
Determing Content of Professional Development	11.5	1.1
Establishing Student Discipline Procedures	31.6	4.7
School Improvement Planning	37.3	7.6
Selecting Instructional Materials	36.3	17.4
Selecting Student Grading and Assessment Practices	47.5	15
Devising Teaching Techniques	49.2	38.7

Percent Reporting **Moderate** and **Large** roles

also reveal that many schools strongly emphasize some elements of instructional leadership that have weaker relationships to student achievement, such as providing objective and consistent teacher performance evaluation.

Hence, the data suggest an imbalance: schools often do not emphasize, or even neglect, some of the elements of instructional leadership that are more strongly related to student achievement, while emphasizing some elements of instructional leadership that are less related to student achievement. In particular, as mentioned above, it is striking that schools are less likely to implement some of those elements of instructional leadership that entail enhancing teacher authority and leadership, even though some of these elements have the strongest ties to student achievement. And vice versa, schools are more likely to implement some of those elements of instructional leadership that entail enhancing accountability and teacher evaluation even though some of these elements have the weakest ties to student achievement (see figure 3). These findings
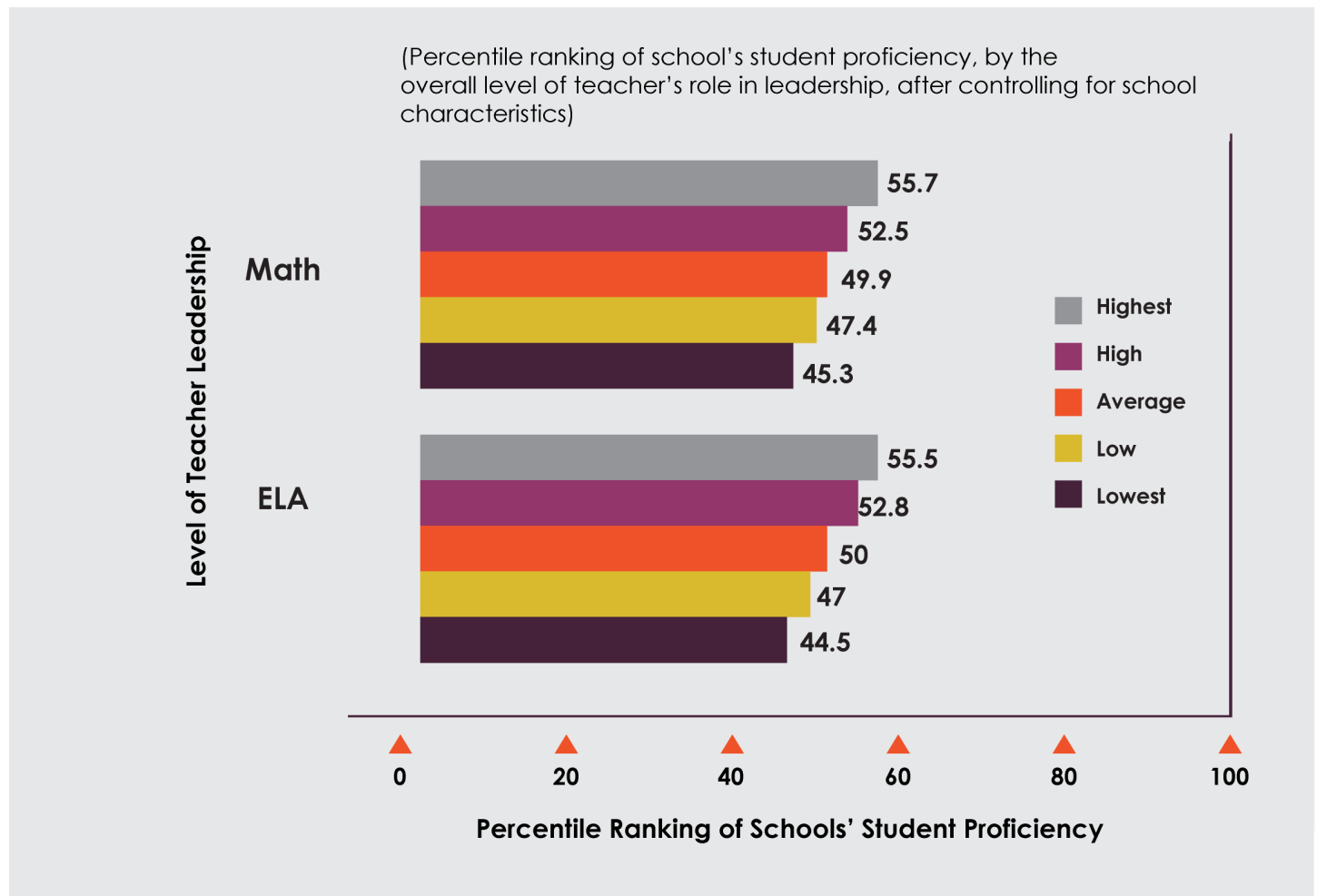
suggest that there is an important lesson for those engaged in the leadership and management of these schools—a point we return to in the conclusion.

Teacher Leadership

In the second part of our study we focused in more detail on potential areas of teacher leadership— specifically, the role of faculty in key areas of decision-making in their schools. Similar to the case of instructional leadership, the data show large variations in teachers' roles across different areas of decision-making within schools. For example, in almost 90 percent of schools, teachers have either a "Moderate" or a "Large" role in "devising teaching techniques," while in less than 10 percent of schools do teachers have such a role in "providing input on how the school budget will be spent" (see Figure 4).

In general, the data indicate that teachers more often have a substantial role in decisions regarding classroom academic instruction, teaching techniques,

Figure 5: Teacher Leadership and Student Achievement

(Percentile ranking of school's student proficiency, by the overall level of teacher's role in leadership, after controlling for school characteristics)

Chart — Level of Teacher Leadership (y-axis) vs. Percentile Ranking of Schools' Student Proficiency (x-axis)

Math
- Highest: 55.7
- High: 52.5
- Average: 49.9
- Low: 47.4
- Lowest: 45.3

ELA
- Highest: 55.5
- High: 52.8
- Average: 50
- Low: 47
- Lowest: 44.5

Legend: Highest, High, Average, Low, Lowest

x-axis: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100

Percentile Ranking of Schools' Student Proficiency

and student grading, and less often have a role in beyond the classroom, school-wide decisions, both academic and nonacademic, such as establishing student behavior policies, engaging in school improvement planning, and determining the content of professional development programs.

Again, these variations were more marked when we focused solely on the highest level on the four-unit scale—in this case, those percentages of schools in which teachers report having a "Large" role. For instance, while 37 percent faculties reported that teachers have a "Moderate" role in school improvement planning, only about 8 percent reported that teachers have a "Large" role in this area of decision-making. In comparison, in almost 40 percent of schools faculty reported teachers have a "Large" role in determining teaching techniques.

Similar to the variations in instructional leadership, the

data also reveal a wide range in the role of teachers in leadership across different types of schools. Again, among the most prominent differences are those according to school poverty level. For five of the eight areas of teacher leadership, faculty in low-poverty schools reported a larger role for faculty than in high-poverty schools. For instance, in only about 9 percent of high-poverty schools do faculty have a substantial role in selecting new teachers; this was true for double that percentage in low-poverty schools.

Most importantly, as with instructional leadership, our analyses also show that teacher leadership is strongly related to student achievement in schools. The results of our advanced statistical analyses clearly show that teacher leadership and the amount of teacher influence into school decision-making are independently and significantly related to student achievement, after controlling for the background characteristics of schools, and this is so for both

Figure 6: Imbalance in Teachers' Role in Decision-making
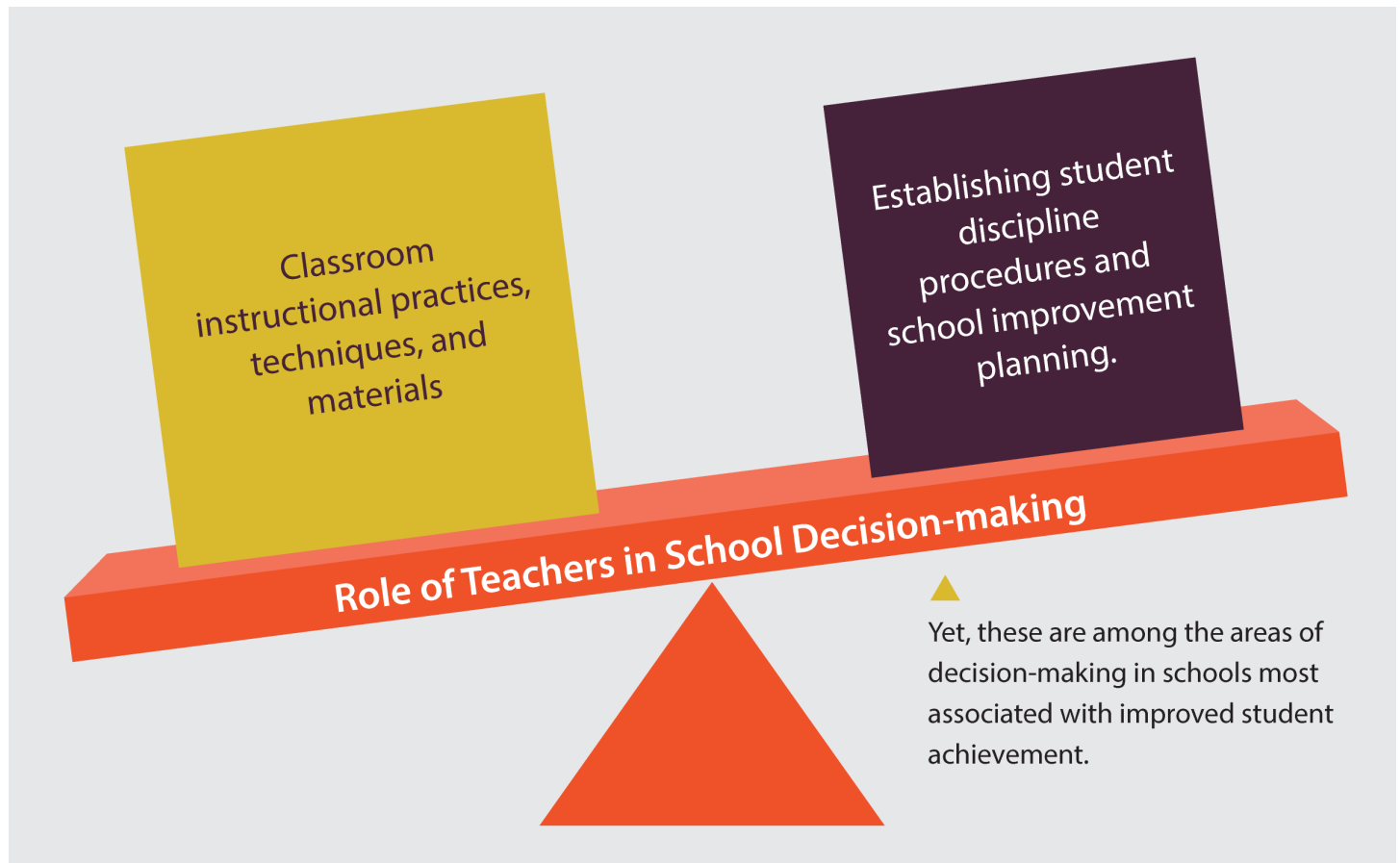
mathematics and ELA.

For example, holding constant school background characteristics (at average levels of poverty, size, etc.), a school with the highest overall level of teacher leadership, on average, is ranked at the 56th percentile in both mathematics proficiency and ELA proficiency in its state. In contrast, a school with the lowest level of teacher leadership, on average is ranked at the 45th percentile in both mathematics proficiency and ELA proficiency (see Figure 5). We also found that while schools vary in the degree to which their teachers are involved in leadership, regardless of the type of school, increases in the role of teachers in leadership are strongly associated with improvements in student achievement.

Paralleling our findings for instructional leadership, teacher input in some areas of teacher decision-making more strongly tied to student achievement than others. The decision-making area with by far the strongest relationship with student achievement was establishing student discipline procedures. For example, a one-unit difference (on our four-unit scale)

in the role of teachers in establishing student discipline procedures is associated with an 11 percentile difference in that school's ranking in mathematics proficiency. Interestingly, the data suggest that faculty voice and control related to student behavioral and discipline decisions are more consequential for student academic achievement in the school than teacher authority related to issues seemingly more directly tied to classroom instruction, such as selecting textbooks, choosing grading practices, and devising one's classroom teaching techniques. This is a striking finding, which we return to in the conclusion.

The teacher leadership issue with the next strongest association with achievement is teachers' role in school improvement planning. Schools in which faculty have a "Large" role in school improvement planning ranked, on average, over 20 percentiles higher in ELA than schools in which faculty had a "Small" role in such planning.

Although the data indicate that schools in which teachers have a substantial role in student discipline procedures and school improvement planning have

significantly higher student achievement, recall that the data also show that in the majority of schools teachers report having little role in either of these two areas.

The finding on teachers' role in school improvement planning is especially revealing when combined with the previously discussed instructional leadership data on school improvement teams. Collectively, these two sets of data—on instructional leadership and teacher leadership—indicate that having a school improvement team that provides effective leadership, and also delegating a large role to teachers in school improvement planning, are among the most important practices in schools associated with improved student achievement. But the data also reveal that many schools do not have a school improvement team that provides effective leadership and, moreover, that most schools do not provide teachers a substantial role in such planning activities. The latter connection is important. The data show that schools that have more teacher involvement in school improvement planning are highly likely to also have a more effective school improvement team and are also highly likely to have better student achievement.

Once again, the data suggest an imbalance: schools often do not promote some of the most consequential areas of teacher leadership and, vice versa, teachers have a larger role in areas that appear to be less tied to student achievement (see figure 6).

Conclusion

In sum, our study shows that the degree of both instructional leadership and teacher leadership in schools is strongly related to the performance of schools. After controlling for school background demographic characteristics, schools with higher levels of instructional leadership and teacher leadership rank higher in student achievement, for both mathematics and ELA. Moreover, the data show that some elements of instructional leadership and some areas of teacher leadership are more strongly related than others to student achievement.

Our analyses also suggest the presence of an imbalance. Some of those elements of instructional leadership and areas of teacher leadership that are most strongly related to student achievement are least often implemented in schools. This imbalance speaks to the fundamental objective of teacher leadership and teacher professionalization reforms.

The data indicate that holding teachers to high

instructional standards – a key element of instructional leadership that is conceptually aligned with enhanced accountability – is among the most strongly related to higher achievement. The data also indicate that two elements of instructional leadership that are conceptually aligned with enhanced teacher authority and leadership—providing an effective administrator–teacher school improvement team and fostering a shared vision among faculty and administration for the school—are also among the most strongly related to higher achievement. Yet, schools are far more likely to implement high teacher standards than they are to have effective school improvement teams or a shared vision.

We found similar results for teacher leadership: some areas of teacher leadership that are the most strongly related to achievement are least often present in schools. The data indicate that teachers' roles in establishing student discipline procedures and school improvement planning are the most strongly related to student achievement. Yet, in only a minority of schools do teachers have a large role in either of these two key areas.

These data analyses suggest the benefits of a balanced approach. In other words, schools that promote <u>both</u> teacher accountability and teacher leadership have better performance. In sum, our study suggests first, that leadership matters, and second, that good school leadership actively involves teachers in decision-making, and third, these are tied to higher student achievement.

As mentioned earlier, it is striking that teacher authority over student behavioral and discipline decisions appears more consequential for academic success in the school than teacher authority over issues ostensibly more directly tied to classroom instruction. This raises the question: Why would teacher leadership in this seemingly nonacademic issue—student discipline policies—be so strongly related to student academic success?

Data from other studies we have conducted suggest one explanation (Ingersoll, 2003, 2012; Ingersoll & Collins, 2017). These earlier analyses of national data indicate that teachers are given primary responsibility for establishing classroom climate and for managing student behavior. But these data also tell us that teachers often have little input into decisions regarding school-wide behavioral and disciplinary policies, norms, and standards for students. Instead, these rules and guidelines are largely conceived by others. Similarly, teachers often have little say over the types of rewards or sanctions used to bolster or enforce these rules. These limitations on teachers' authority can undermine their ability to take charge of their classrooms and to

successfully meet their responsibilities. Indeed, these earlier studies indicate that a lack of authority on the part of teachers can degrade their role with students—pushing it in a negative and punitive direction. Their job can become akin to "police persons" enforcing rules made by others and rules with which they may not agree. Here, our analyses of TELL data further suggest teachers' authority in relation to student behavior is also tied to student achievement.

It is important to recognize, however, that teacher input into student behavioral policies is not simply a pragmatic issue of classroom management necessary for academic instruction to proceed. Schooling is not solely a matter of instructing children in the "three Rs" and passing on essential academic skills and knowledge. Schools are one of the major institutions for the socialization of the young. Teachers do not just teach academic subjects. They are also charged with furthering the social-emotional learning of the young.

Poll after poll has shown the public overwhelmingly feels one of the most important goals of schools is and should be to shape conduct, develop character, and impart values (see for example, the annual Phi Delta Kappa Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools). In this view, the relationships that teachers successfully form with students are crucial to connect students to school, create a sense of community, and support their growth and learning. To the public, the good school is characterized by a positive ethos and climate and well-behaved children and youth. Deciding which behaviors and values are proper and best for the young is not a trivial, neutral, or value-free task. Our data here appear to suggest that it is important that teachers have a voice in these larger decisions related to creating the culture, climate, and ethos of their schools.

In our explanation, at the crux of the role and of the success of teachers, as the men and women in the middle, is their level of authority over tasks and issues for which they are responsible. On the one hand, if teachers have sufficient say over the decisions surrounding those activities for which they are responsible, they will be more able to exert sufficient influence to see that the job is done properly, and in turn, derive respect with administrators, colleagues, and students. On the other hand, if teachers' authority over school and classroom policies is not sufficient to accomplish the tasks for which they are responsible, they will meet neither groups' needs, and sour their relationships. The teacher who has little control and power is the teacher who is less able to get things done, is the teacher with less credibility. Principals can more easily neglect backing them. Peers may be more likely to shun them. And, based on our analysis of the TELL data, students' academic achievement will suffer.

This perspective suggests the benefits of a balanced approach that stresses the importance of aligning and combining accountability and autonomy as well as responsibility and authority. In this approach teachers would first be provided with the resources, conditions, tools, support, authority, and autonomy necessary for quality teaching, and then they would be held accountable for doing a quality job (for discussion of this reform approach, see Hawkins, 2009; Kolderie, 2008, 2014; Farris-Berg & Dirkswager, 2013; Berry et al., 2013).

This need for balance between accountability and autonomy and between responsibility and authority is not unique to schools. Indeed, the importance of balancing both sets of imperatives is a long-standing central tenet in the theory and practice of organizational management.

Experts in the realm of organizational leadership, including both the profit and nonprofit sectors, have long advocated a balanced approach to implementing accountability in work settings (e.g., Whyte & Blasi, 1982; Drucker, 1973, 1992). In this view, organizational accountability and employee autonomy and authority must go hand in hand in workplaces, and increases in one must be accompanied by increases in the other; imbalances between the two can result in problems for both employees and organizations. Delegating autonomy or authority to employees without also ensuring commensurate accountability can foster inefficiencies and irresponsible behavior and lead to low performance. Likewise, administering organizational accountability without providing commensurate autonomy and authority to employees can foster job dissatisfaction, increase employee turnover, and lead to low performance.

A balanced approach is a key characteristic underlying the model of the established professions, such as law, medicine, university professors, dentistry, engineering (Freidson 1986; Hodson & Sullivan, 1995). In the professional model, practitioners are, ideally, first provided with the training, resources, conditions, and autonomy to do the job—and then they are held accountable for doing the job well.

Translating this balanced perspective to the school setting suggests that it does not make sense to hold teachers accountable for issues they do not have authority over, nor does it make sense to give teachers autonomy or authority over issues for which they are not held accountable. Both of these changes are necessary, and neither alone is sufficient.

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