



REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Teacher Leadership in High Schools: How Principals Encourage It—How Teachers Practice It

Download free copies of the brief at:

[http://www.iel.org/pubs/
metlife_teacher_report.pdf](http://www.iel.org/pubs/metlife_teacher_report.pdf)

**See the reverse side for
highlights. Use the tool below to
help you get started in your
school and district.**

Does My School/District Support Teacher Leadership?

This tool helps you assess whether your school/district is supporting teacher leadership. The questions guide your thinking about ways to instill and/or improve teacher leadership in your district and schools.

| Teacher Leadership Indicator(s) | Yes/ No | The Evidence? |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Our school has a leadership team that includes teachers? | | |
| Our school schedule builds in common planning time so that teachers can work together? | | |
| Teachers are part of a committee that builds and communicates our school's mission and vision? | | |
| Teachers have the opportunity to express their professional development needs ,and help identify strategies to address them? | | |
| Teachers work in partnership with administrators to set standards for student behavior and discipline policy? | | |
| Teachers evaluate and review the work of their peers? | | |
| Teachers evaluate and review the work of administrators? | | |
| Teachers have a role in selecting new staff members (both teachers and administrators)? | | |
| Teachers are part of a committee that builds and decides our school's budget? | | |

“...Teachers reported that they increasingly hold roles and are responsible for functions that are not traditionally considered part of their job.”
(*Teacher Leadership in High School*, p.8)

Teacher Leadership in High Schools: How Principals Encourage It—How Teachers Practice It provides a picture of the condition and the status of teacher leadership as described and as practiced in high schools across the country. The study also identifies specific areas where teacher leadership is underdeveloped (district level) or nonexistent (state and beyond level).

The major conclusions from the study are:

1. *Teacher leadership is being fostered in high schools large and small, and in different parts of the country.*
2. *Principals are supportive collaborators.*
3. *Teachers are doing a lot more than teaching.*
4. *Teachers lead because they recognize a need.*
5. *The whole school benefits from teacher leadership.*

We invite decision makers at all levels to join in an important conversation—seeking answers to questions about teacher leadership—a required strategy in our nation’s efforts to educate all children and youth.

Do school or district policies support institutionalizing teacher leadership?

Systemic practices that support teachers as leaders—i.e., common planning time—should be built into school and/or district policies. Teachers’ voices are rarely present in policy discussions at the district or state and beyond levels. As a result, teachers do not have an impact on the policies that affect them the most.

What policies and programs can increase the capacity of principals to support teacher leadership?

Supportive principals are critical to teacher leadership. Currently, several innovative principal training programs focus on developing the skills necessary to foster collaborative work environments; all programs should include this focus. In addition, all teacher preparation programs should focus on teacher leadership and on increasing teachers’ capacity to lead.

What policies and programs can increase the capacity of teachers to be part of the decision making processes at the school level? At the district level? At the state and beyond level?

This study documents that teacher leadership at the school level is weakest on such matters as school budgets and teacher selection. There may be lessons to be learned from the research on collaborative or professional learning communities that would help prepare principals who could support teachers as an integral part of policy decisions. The study also documents that teacher leadership is weak at the district level, and almost nonexistent at the state and beyond level. This makes it impossible for teachers to advocate for policy change in support of improved student outcomes. Teacher leaders want to be engaged in policymaking, but know that they need training—as well as encouragement—to help them achieve this goal (Center for Teacher Leadership, 2003).

What policies would make it possible to assess the impact of teacher leadership on student outcomes?

In order to measure the impact of teacher leadership on student outcomes, there is a need to identify student performance indicators (aside from AYP), as well as indicators of teacher leadership. Further research might yield such indicators, as well as strategies to encourage and support teacher leadership.

See the reverse side for a tool to help you get started in your school and district.

Visit IEL’s Web site to download copies of the report:
http://www.iel.org/pubs/metlife_teacher_report.pdf

Published by the Institute for Educational Leadership, with support from the MetLife Foundation