

2017 June 6



THE CASE FOR TEACHER LEADERS

Elevating the Teaching Profession
and Sustaining Equity and Excellence





CHIEFS FOR CHANGE IS A COALITION OF STATE EDUCATION CHIEFS AND DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS DEDICATED TO EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY FOR ALL STUDENTS.

We advocate for the policies and practices working for students, facilitate a robust system of peer-to-peer advising among our members, and sustain a pipeline of the next generation of Chiefs.

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	2
THE CHALLENGES	3
THE WAY FORWARD	4 - 7
CHIEFS IN ACTION	7 - 9
LOUISIANA'S VISION AND STRUCTURE	7
NEW MEXICO'S VISION AND STRUCTURE	8
TENNESSEE'S VISION AND STRUCTURE	8
UPCOMING BRIEFS	9
APPENDIX A	10
TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY GRAPHICS	11 - 12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Everyone agrees that teacher leadership is critically important. However, effectively leveraging teacher leadership across initiatives and policy areas at the state level can be challenging. This brief introduces a continuum for meaningful teacher leader engagement and outlines three objectives of teacher leadership for state Chiefs to consider:

1. Empowering and leveraging high-performing teachers to create and sustain effective education policies,
2. Building a culture of innovation and shared responsibility toward constant improvement, and
3. Using teacher leaders to address and solve critical issues or challenges at the school and district levels.

We provide a high-level overview of three state models that address these objectives in their unique contexts, aligned to the frameworks provided. In subsequent publications, we will release case studies that profile in more detail how some of our members are identifying a vision for teacher leadership and the role teachers play in that vision, meaningfully building relationships with teacher leaders individually and at scale, developing the systems to effectively support and leverage those teachers, and measuring the effectiveness of their teacher leadership initiatives against their stated vision and goals.

THE CASE FOR TEACHER LEADERS

Elevating the Teaching Profession and Sustaining Equity and Excellence

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to engage meaningfully with a wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, principals, and other school leaders, to create a common vision of educational opportunity, equity, and accountability, while also providing new opportunities to use federal funds to bolster teacher leadership. This issue brief is part of a series that examines steps state leaders can take to meaningfully activate and engage teacher leaders as part of a comprehensive engagement strategy to support greater equity and better outcomes for students.

INTRODUCTION

ESSA requires states and districts to meaningfully consult with a variety of stakeholders, including teachers, principals, and other school leaders, in the development and implementation of comprehensive plans to improve student outcomes. Engaging solutions-oriented teachers in strategy, policy planning, and implementation can help Chiefs generate more support for policy changes, particularly those that impact teacher and leader effectiveness (e.g., preparation, evaluation, career ladder pathways, professional development, and compensation) and Title funds usage. ESSA provides state and district Chiefs with new opportunities to use Title funds to support teacher leaders by making clear that [Title II funds](#) may be used by states to provide training and support for teacher leaders, and by districts to create systems of professional growth and improvement that enhance teacher leadership (ESEA sections 2101(c)(4)(B)(v)(II) and 2102(b)(2)(B)).

Since early 2016, CFC has led a cohort of Chiefs through a workgroup that has provided state Chiefs the opportunity to connect with one another in a peer-to-peer setting, get feedback on their emerging ESSA visions and goals, and discuss ways to include educator voice in the design of their plans. In doing so, these Chiefs are working together to advance efforts to elevate and modernize the teaching profession in ways that empower and enable teacher leaders to support implementation and sustainability of the school improvement efforts that our Chiefs are working to advance.

As part of the workgroup, participating Chiefs receive support with developing approaches that span CFC's **teacher leadership and advocacy continuum** (depicted below and in Appendix A), from stage 1 through stage 5, as part of their ESSA plans that ultimately result in shared responsibility of a broader vision for improving education across their states.

In this brief, we introduce the continuum and outline three objectives of teacher leadership from leading Chiefs as a resource for those committed to implementing or supporting similar local efforts. In addition, we introduce a framework for how Chiefs could think about designing, implementing, and measuring the effectiveness of their teacher leadership strategies. As part of later briefs in this series, we will use these

tools as the lens for highlighting promising practices from Chiefs currently doing this work in Louisiana, New Mexico, and Tennessee. A high-level overview of their approaches is summarized in this introductory brief.

It is worth clarifying that for the purpose of this brief, we are referring to teacher leaders who advocate and lead policy and practice initiatives at the state level. We are not using the term “teacher leader” to refer to a specific job title at the school level (though these positions may be complementary and critical to a Chief’s big picture strategy). For more information on leveraging those opportunities at the state and district level, see our paper [Title II-A: Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers, Principals, and Other School Leaders](#).

THE CHALLENGES

Traditionally, educator input in many states and districts has tended to result in participation in workgroups, forums, and councils. If used strategically, these opportunities can be effective and impactful. However, too often these roles are not accessible to the highest-performing educators, lack a clear and rigorous selection process to make sure a diverse group of top teachers are involved, have limited or no training on the policy making process, and only provide educators an opportunity to provide limited feedback rather than engage in dialogue about creative solutions to address key challenges. In addition, because they can be limited in duration, they may not be designed to allow for continuous feedback loops from other educators across the state. We outline these challenges related to the three key objectives for teacher leadership for state Chiefs below:

Empowering teachers to create and sustain effective education policies: One of the greatest challenges we face in public education is how to create and sustain meaningful change. For change to be transformative it should not rely on any individual. We should inspire and invest in a wide array of stakeholders responsible for these policies’ daily implementation and long-term sustainability. **If we are to dramatically improve student outcomes, leveraging our strongest, most effective teachers by giving them opportunities to advocate for the policies and practices that will elevate the profession must be a top priority.**

Building a culture of innovation and shared responsibility toward constant improvement: Driving innovation from the state is challenging given structures, rules, and bureaucracy that often inhibit nimble and innovative thinking or approaches. In order to build a culture of innovation and shared responsibility for schools, we must invest in the highest performing educators, and we must learn from their efforts and use those lessons to inform future policy decisions.

Using teacher leaders to address and solve critical issues or challenges at the school and district levels: Teachers want to see their time and effort be strategically allocated and clearly directed toward a specific challenge or opportunity. Too many times, we have seen states or districts develop “teacher leader” initiatives that may or may not be clear or specific about the issues they are seeking to address or the challenges that need solving. Worse, they may be creating these opportunities just for the sake of creating them or to “check a box.” However, teachers, like all of us, appreciate clear expectations and a clear understanding of the

purpose of their efforts. Further, the challenge or issue they are addressing should be a real one, one that the state cannot accomplish without the creativity, innovation, and ideas of those closest to the work.

THE WAY FORWARD

As a way forward, we outline a framework for how to think about the work happening across leading states in our membership.

Prioritizing teacher leadership and advocacy elevates the teaching profession and makes significant, lasting reform possible. The intentional and systematic investment in teacher leader development is a critical way to address the objectives we've outlined above to: (1) empower and leverage high-performing teachers to create and sustain effective education policies, (2) build a culture of innovation and shared responsibility toward constant improvement, and (3) address critical issues or challenges at the school and district levels. As the framework below highlights, states can articulate a vision for these objectives clearly and in accordance with their context. In doing so, they should also identify metrics for success aligned to that vision. However, for any vision for teacher leadership to become reality, Chiefs should think about how to build meaningful relationships with educators and develop systems to sustain those relationships and networks.

A Pathway to Move Forward with Teacher Leaders

Know your vision and the role that teachers will play	Have clarity about your theory of change and a transparent approach to the content, decisions, and conversations where you will seek the voice of teachers. This will inform how, when, and where you engage teachers and what related training might entail. Teachers recognize and respond to clarity of vision and charge for their work.
Build meaningful relationships with large and small groups of educators	Create authentic engagement. Forming deep relationships with a select group of educators creates your "kitchen cabinet" of informed and trusted advisors helping to chart a course and bring others on board.
Develop systems	Approach teacher engagement with disciplined systems so that every interaction is high-quality, ideas are curated and acted upon, efforts can be scaled up over time, and relationships are prioritized.
Identify metrics	Identify meaningful metrics of success to assess both short-term and long-term progress aligned to goals. Ensure your entire team is focused on these metrics and align performance management around these.

Chiefs can proactively engage teachers on the front end of change – building and benefiting from teachers' perspective, investment, and advocacy. Engaging teachers as leaders means co-creating a culture of highly

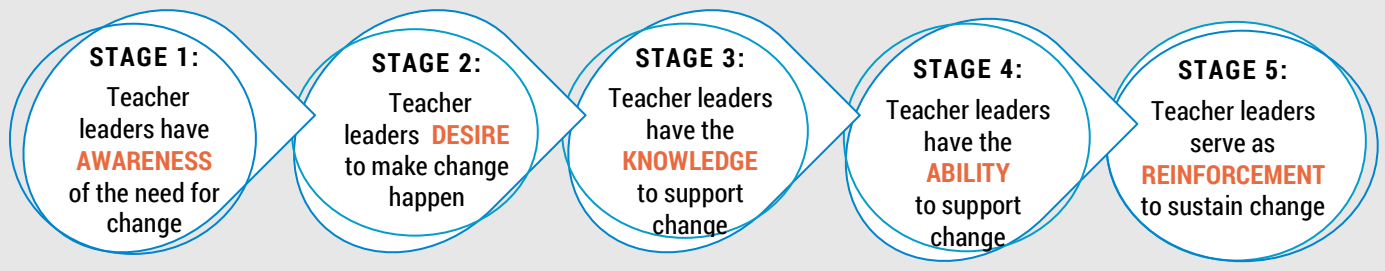
engaged and invested educators with a shared responsibility for a unified vision of success for students. With the average state Chief having a tenure of just 2.2 years¹, effectively developing a system for teacher leadership to thrive increases the likelihood of change being sustained beyond a system-level leader's tenure. Engaging the voices of effective educators early and throughout a Chief's work using the five-stage continuum depicted below can result in a more engaged network of educators and a wider pool of advocates ready to champion and sustain visionary work.

We've observed that states with more collaborative and transformative teacher leadership approaches seem to follow proven, research-based change management processes. The continuum below is adapted from a change management model shown to support organizational transformation.²

Teacher Leadership and Advocacy Continuum

What it is: Moving forward, Chiefs can develop a framework for teacher leadership that utilizes two-way forms of communication and authentic engagement that empowers teacher leaders to advocacy and long-term action. Approaches that span the entire continuum from stage 1 through stage 5 follow the models of the most successful leaders and can result in shared responsibility or improving education.

What it is not: Past engagement efforts have been criticized for occurring through one-way forms of communication and more traditional events that are limited and time-bound in nature. Teacher leadership approaches that only reach up to stage 3 do not tap into the full potential of teacher leaders as a critical partner in effective implementation and sustainability of those efforts.



Three core competencies have been identified in effective system leaders: (1) seeing the big picture, (2) cultivating generative dialogue, and (3) moving “the collective focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future.”³ Teacher leaders can be a critical part of system leaders’ “generative dialogue.” When effectively engaged, developed, and inspired, teachers can help inform system leaders’ policy decisions and

¹ CCSSO reports the 2017 average State Chief tenure as 2.2 years (see: http://online.ccsso.org/iweb/upload/Agenda_CCSSOAPF2016.pdf). Chiefs for Change members have an average tenure of 4.3 years.

² Jeffrey M. Hyatt., “ADKAR: A Model for Change in Business, Government, and Community,” *Prosci Learning Center Publications*, 2006. <https://www.prosci.com/adkar>.

³ Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton, & John Kania, “The Dawn of System Leadership,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2015.

direction in design phases and can provide real-time guidance through feedback loops for problem solving and continuous improvement throughout implementation. When teachers have been invited in as authentic stakeholders and equipped with knowledge and the ability to make system change as the continuum depicts, we find that they are inherently more invested in supporting and promoting effective implementation, which can translate into better outcomes for students in both the short and long terms.

Key Questions Through Engagement Along the Continuum

Consider the following questions to inform your approach. Using the five stages of engagement, Chiefs can create proof points of successful teacher leadership and advocacy. Forming this culture of shared responsibility elevates the teaching profession and creates a sustainable vision for success.

AWARENESS

Ensure that teacher leaders understand the need behind the vision for change.

- Are you clear about articulating the problem you are trying to solve and your vision for dramatically improving outcomes for all students?
- What are your current communication vehicles to and with teachers? What feedback loops do you currently use to check understanding?

DESIRE

Engage teacher leaders to support the vision for change and gain their willingness to participate in affecting change.

- What is the current reality of teacher leadership in relation to the work you are advancing? What role do teacher leaders play in efforts to address the problem, if any?
- Are you clear about the challenges and needs of teachers in supporting your vision and mission?
- How will you engage teacher leaders as authentic partners in the work? What do you want to do differently?

KNOWLEDGE

Provide training or information so that teacher leaders understand what skills are necessary to implement the vision for change.

- How can teacher leaders help facilitate and manage change?
- How can you train teacher leaders and ensure they have the knowledge and skills to do this work?

ABILITY

Create systems and the conditions for teacher leaders to be part of implementation, demonstrating their ability to apply their knowledge and skills to engage in solutions as partners.

- What systems currently exist to provide support? What additional opportunities can be leveraged to fully support your initiatives and teacher leaders' roles within the process?
- How will awareness, perceptions, knowledge, skills, and impact be measured? What role can teacher leaders play in this collection and analysis of efforts?

REINFORCEMENT

Rely on teacher leaders for long-term advocacy and action to transform culture and continuously improve efforts system-wide.

- How can teacher leaders monitor progress and address issues as they arise for continuous improvement?
- How can teacher leaders identify when goals have been met and celebrate short and long-term success?
- Are teacher leaders effectively leveraged to support and inform key initiatives?
- Are the most effective teacher leaders regularly provided opportunities to have influence and inform key initiatives? Are your teacher leaders mobilized as a base to provide feedback on key issues and to demand high expectations for students?

CHIEFS IN ACTION

In subsequent briefs in this series, we will highlight three state models from across the CFC membership that share a focus on magnifying the impact of the most effective educators to support outcomes for students, but do so through different approaches. Louisiana, New Mexico, and Tennessee's state models address the objectives we've outlined in this brief in their unique contexts, aligned to the framework and continuum provided.

We've observed that each of these states has ensured that teachers are aware of the need for change and the role that teacher leaders can serve in addressing those needs. Through clear communication and engagement strategies, Chiefs have gained significant buy-in, and teacher leaders genuinely desire to be part of the solution.

In New Mexico, for example, 738 teachers applied to fill 50 spots for the state's inaugural Teacher Leader Network. Still, gaining buy-in was not enough, and each state approach ensured that teacher leaders were equipped with the knowledge *and* the ability to apply that knowledge to enact change. For example, in Louisiana, Teacher Leader Advisors receive training designed specifically for the leadership roles that they hold. Lastly, these states ensure that teacher leaders have the opportunity to sustain change over time by being part of continuous improvement efforts at the state, district, or even school levels.

Each of these states' approaches differ from traditional models in that they engage a greater number of educators in meaningful two-way communication with the state and provide Chiefs with direct access to a cadre of high-performing teacher leaders that have a shared responsibility for system-level change and continuous improvement. We preview these models below and in the accompanying graphic.

Louisiana's Vision

- The Louisiana Teacher Leaders make up a group of outstanding educators from around the state who are focused on high expectations for students.
- Three core beliefs guide this work: (1) Those closest to students are best positioned to make instructional decisions; (2) The state has a role in providing resources and training directly to teachers; and (3) Teacher Leaders are a powerful voice in training fellow teachers.
- The Teacher Leader initiative aims to: (1) Help teachers improve their classroom instruction by providing them with high-quality tools and resources; (2) Foster widespread use of these tools and sharing of best practices with other teachers in their school/district; and (3) Recognize and elevate Louisiana's most talented and dedicated educators.

Louisiana's Structure

- Louisiana has two networks of teacher leaders—a core group selected at the state level, and a larger state-wide network selected by districts and schools.
- The core group of approximately 100 Teacher Leader Advisors serve as an extension of the state education agency to create resources for teachers across the state as well as provide support for a larger group of over 5,000 teacher leaders, more than three educators per school.

- These teachers receive high-quality professional development, turn-key it to other teachers, and advocate for high-quality professional development in their school.

New Mexico's Vision

- New Mexico believes that if the department can: (1) Equip teachers with information, instructional tools, and access to policymakers; (2) Empower teachers to take action and provide feedback on issues impacting schools; and (3) Champion the success of teachers in New Mexico as a vision for the profession;
- Teachers can in turn: (1) Equip their students with critical thinking and problem solving skills to be successful in college and careers; (2) Empower their students to take ownership of their learning; and (3) Champion their students' successes.

New Mexico's Structure

- New Mexico uses an in-house teacher leader coordinator and a network of external partners coordinated at the state level to support its teacher leader work.
- New Mexico's Teacher Liaison is a teacher-on-leave, working full-time with the department to build its Teacher Leader Network and provide a teacher perspective on programmatic decision making. The Teacher Liaison engages with other educators to create buy-in and share the Chief's vision for education reform.
- The department is also working with several external partners to add capacity and support to its teacher leadership and advocacy efforts focused on policy, curriculum, and the Teacher Leader Network.
- Teachers participating in the Teacher Leader Network were identified through a rigorous selection process conducted by the SEA.
- Each of these efforts is intended to build an ecosystem to support teacher leadership and could be run fully by the department. This provides the state with long-term structures to ensure that there is two-way communication between teachers and the department.

Tennessee's Vision

- The goals of Tennessee's Teacher Leader Network are: (1) Increased student achievement and growth through the development of a shared leadership structure at the school level; (2) Broader dissemination and use of effective teacher strategies through an increase in teacher collaboration; and (3) Stronger and more positive school and district culture through the development and retention of highly effective teachers.
- The SEA believes that if districts engage in creating exemplary, innovative, relevant, and sustainable teacher leader models that identify, develop, and extend the reach of teacher leaders, then Tennessee will see results in increased teacher effectiveness and improved student learning.

Tennessee's Structure

- Tennessee has initially focused on a district-based model, and then subsequently created a network of networks at the state level. The network is a group of 46 select districts that use research, a comprehensive framework, and the Tennessee Teacher Leader Standards as a foundation to create unique teacher leader models within their districts.
- In the 2016-17 school year the network expanded to include districts working to build new (known as Stage One) or expand established (known as Stage Two) district models. Stage Two districts are completing a project

plan designed to refine their models and develop support tools for continuous improvement. The SEA works collaboratively with regional coaches, exemplary central office leaders from within the Teacher Leader Network who receive stipends to coach and provide differentiated supports to stage one and stage two districts within the network.

- These efforts are supported by the Tennessee Teacher Leader Collaborative (TTLIC) co-led by the TN Department of Education and SCORE to create a network of networks to provide a structure for ongoing collaboration between the Teacher Leader Network and the state's other teacher leadership related efforts led by external organizations like Hope Street Group and SCORE.

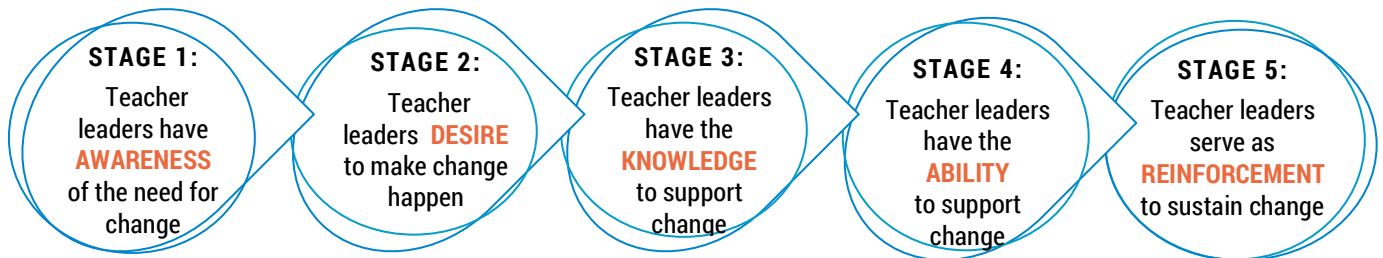
UPCOMING BRIEFS

In subsequent briefs in this series, we will share specific resources and case studies on each of these state models. In this way, the briefs will show how within a range of different systems and structures, teacher leaders can be great partners in a Chief's broader vision for improving education across their state or district. The briefs are intended to inspire and provide a roadmap for other Chiefs wishing to adopt similar approaches.

Visit chiefsforchange.org/policy-papers/ to view other briefs and tools from Chiefs for Change. Visit <http://chiefsforchange.org/our-chiefs/> to learn more about our members.

APPENDIX A: KEY QUESTIONS THROUGH ENGAGEMENT ALONG THE CONTINUUM⁴

Consider the following questions to inform your approach. Using the five stages of engagement, Chiefs can create proof points of successful teacher leadership and advocacy. Forming this culture of shared responsibility elevates the teaching profession and creates a sustainable vision for success.



<p>AWARENESS</p> <p>Ensure that teacher leaders understand the need behind the vision for change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you clear about articulating the problem you are trying to solve and your vision for dramatically improving outcomes for all students? • What are your current communication vehicles to and with teachers? What feedback loops do you currently use to check understanding?
<p>DESIRE</p> <p>Engage teacher leaders to support the vision for change and gain their willingness to participate in affecting change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current reality of teacher leadership in relation to the work you are advancing? What role do teacher leaders play in efforts to address the problem, if any? • Are you clear about the challenges and needs of teachers in supporting your vision and mission? • How will you engage teacher leaders as authentic partners in the work? What do you want to do differently?
<p>KNOWLEDGE</p> <p>Provide training or information so that teacher leaders understand what skills are necessary to implement the vision for change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can teacher leaders help facilitate and manage change? • How can you train teacher leaders and ensure they have the knowledge and skills to do this work?
<p>ABILITY</p> <p>Create systems and the conditions for teacher leaders to be part of implementation, demonstrating their ability to apply their knowledge and skills to engage in solutions as partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What systems currently exist to provide support? What additional opportunities can be leveraged to fully support your initiatives and teacher leaders' roles within the process? • How will awareness, perceptions, knowledge, skills, and impact be measured? What role can teacher leaders play in this collection and analysis of efforts?
<p>REINFORCEMENT</p> <p>Rely on teacher leaders for long-term advocacy and action to transform culture and continuously improve efforts system-wide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can teacher leaders monitor progress and address issues as they arise for continuous improvement? • How can teacher leaders identify when goals have been met and celebrate short and long-term success? • Are teacher leaders effectively leveraged to support and inform key initiatives? • Are the most effective teacher leaders regularly provided opportunities to have influence and inform key initiatives? Are your teacher leaders mobilized as a base to provide feedback on key issues and to demand high expectations for students?

⁴The continuum is adapted from the ADKAR model, a research-based, individual and organizational change model. Jeffrey M. Hyatt, "ADKAR: A Model for Change in Business, Government, and Community," *Prosci Learning Center Publications*, 2006. <https://www.prosci.com/adkar>.

TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY APPROACHES FOR STATE CHIEFS

State Chiefs are prioritizing teacher leadership and advocacy to elevate the teaching profession and make significant, lasting reform possible. Louisiana, New Mexico, and Tennessee have developed a clear vision to inform the structure they use to realize their goals. For more information see our Teacher Leadership and Advocacy brief and stay tuned for later briefs with resources and case studies on approaches state Chiefs are implementing.



VISION

- SEAs that use a more traditional teacher leader approach do so for varying reasons. Most typically, these efforts stem from legacy initiatives, regulations, or statute.
- In some instances, these traditional approaches are a means for Chiefs to leverage the voice and talents of top teachers to advise on and influence policies and practices throughout the system to benefit students, while in other instances this may be a means to achieve buy-in or consensus with diverse stakeholder groups.

STRUCTURE

- Teacher leaders serve on limited term councils, committees, or in advisory groups as representatives of the educator workforce or stakeholder groups.
- These teacher leaders may report directly to the Chief or to other state officials who leverage their input and voice in decision making or who may use these meetings to share information and seek buy-in or consensus on a variety of topics.

THE TRADITIONAL TEACHER LEADER APPROACH

STATE EDUCATION AGENCY



TEACHER ADVISORY COUNCIL

VISION

- The Louisiana Teacher Leaders make up a group of outstanding educators from around the state who are focused on high expectations for students.
- This group was born out of three core beliefs: (1) Those closest to students are best positioned to make instructional decisions; (2) The state has a role in providing resources and training directly to teachers; and (3) Teacher Leaders are a powerful voice in training fellow teachers.
- The Teacher Leader initiative aims to: (1) Help teachers improve their classroom instruction by providing them with high-quality tools and resources; (2) Foster widespread use of these tools and sharing of best practices with other teachers in their school/district, and (3) Recognize and elevate Louisiana's most talented and dedicated educators.

STRUCTURE

- In Louisiana, a core group of 100+ Teacher Leader Advisors, identified through a highly selective process by the SEA, serve as an extension of the state education agency to create resources for teachers across the state as well as provide support for a larger group of over 5,000 teacher leaders, more than three educators per school, selected by the district or school.
- These teachers receive high-quality professional development, turn-key it to other teachers, and advocate for high-quality professional development in their school.

LOUISIANA

TEACHER LEADER ADVISORS



collaborate to create tools, resources, and professional development



STATE EDUCATION AGENCY

share tools, resources, and professional development



TEACHER LEADERS ACROSS THE STATE



The Teacher Leader initiative began in 2013-2014 with approximately 1,500 educators – about one per school – and has grown to include over 5,000 – more than three educators per school.

VISION

If the department can:

- (1) Equip teachers with information, instructional tools, and access to policymakers; (2) Empower teachers to take action and have the opportunity to provide feedback on issues impacting schools; and (3) Champion the success of teachers in New Mexico as a vision for the profession

Teachers can in turn:

- (1) Equip their students with critical thinking and problem solving skills to be successful in college and careers; (2) Empower their students to take ownership of their learning; and (3) Champion their students' successes.

STRUCTURE

New Mexico's Teacher Liaison is a teacher-on-leave, working full-time with the department to build its Teacher Leader Network and provide a teacher perspective on programmatic decision making. The Teacher Liaison engages with other educators to create buy-in and share the Chief's vision for education reform.

- The department is also working with several external partners to add capacity and support to its teacher leadership and advocacy efforts focused on policy, curriculum, and a Teacher Leader Network.

- Teachers participating in the Teacher Leader Network were identified through a rigorous selection process conducted by the SEA.

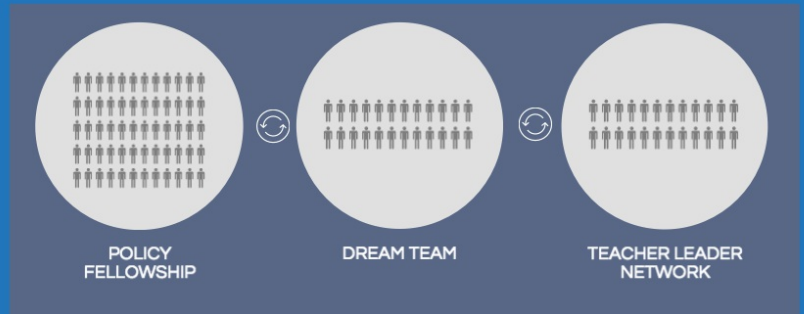
- Together these efforts are intended to build an ecosystem to support teacher leadership and provide the state with long-term structures to ensure that there is two-way communication between teachers to the department.

NEW MEXICO

STATE EDUCATION AGENCY



Teachers participating in the Teacher Leader Network were identified through a rigorous selection process conducted by the SEA, providing the Chief with direct access to teacher voice.



VISION

The goals of Tennessee's Teacher Leader Network are: (1) Increased student achievement and growth through the development of a shared leadership structure at the school level; (2) Broader dissemination and use of effective teacher strategies through an increase in teacher collaboration; and (3) Stronger and more positive school and district culture through the development and retention of highly effective teachers.

- The SEA believes that if districts engage in creating exemplary, innovative, relevant, and sustainable teacher leader models that identify, develop, and extend the reach of teacher leaders, then Tennessee will see results in increased teacher effectiveness and improved student learning.

STRUCTURE

The network is a group of 46 select districts that use research, a comprehensive framework, and the Tennessee Teacher Leader Standards as a foundation to create unique teacher leader models within their districts.

- The SEA publishes the models in annual guidebooks as a source of inspiration for other districts.

In the 2016-17 school year the network expanded to include districts working to build new (known as Stage One) or expand (known as Stage Two) established district models. Stage Two districts are completing a project plan designed to refine their models and develop support tools for continuous improvement. The SEA works collaboratively with regional coaches, exemplary central office leaders from within the Teacher Leader Network who receive stipends to coach and provide differentiated supports to stage one and stage two districts within the network.

- These efforts are supported by the Tennessee Teacher Leader Collaborative (TTLC) co-led by the TN Department of Education and SCORE to create a network of networks to provide a structure for ongoing collaboration between the Teacher Leader Network and the state's other teacher leadership related efforts led by external organizations like Hope Street Group and SCORE.

TENNESSEE

STATE EDUCATION AGENCY



Districts in the Teacher Leader Network are selected by the SEA. This group has grown from 6 to 46 districts since 2013. Regional coaches within the network help their peers develop and refine their approaches based on the state framework and parameters. The network is also a part of the Teacher Leader Collaborative, which gives external groups a structure for ongoing collaboration with the SEA.

