

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a grey patterned top, is smiling and pointing with a white marker at a whiteboard. The whiteboard is covered in handwritten notes and diagrams. The background is slightly blurred, showing other whiteboards and classroom materials.

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# Increasing Impact Through Intentional Leadership Opportunities

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Jen Oliver Brady & Erin Foster

# Session Goals and Structure

## Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will:

- Recognize the integral and valuable role that teacher leaders play in school success, teacher success, and student success
- Understand that creating, implementing, and supporting teacher leader roles with strategy and intention is the key to their impact
- Know how to get started with implementing teacher leadership opportunities

## Agenda

- Why have teacher leaders?
- What is a teacher leader?
- How/where do I start?

”

This process will support teachers to reach their fullest potential, accelerating student learning outcomes. Through our leadership structures, teachers and building leaders across the district are supported and connected in their work. Our teacher leaders are facilitating positive change as they demonstrate what's possible with students through shared leadership and collaboration within their buildings and across the district.

*Cathy Bildhauser, director of K-12 curriculum and instruction, Michigan City Area Schools*

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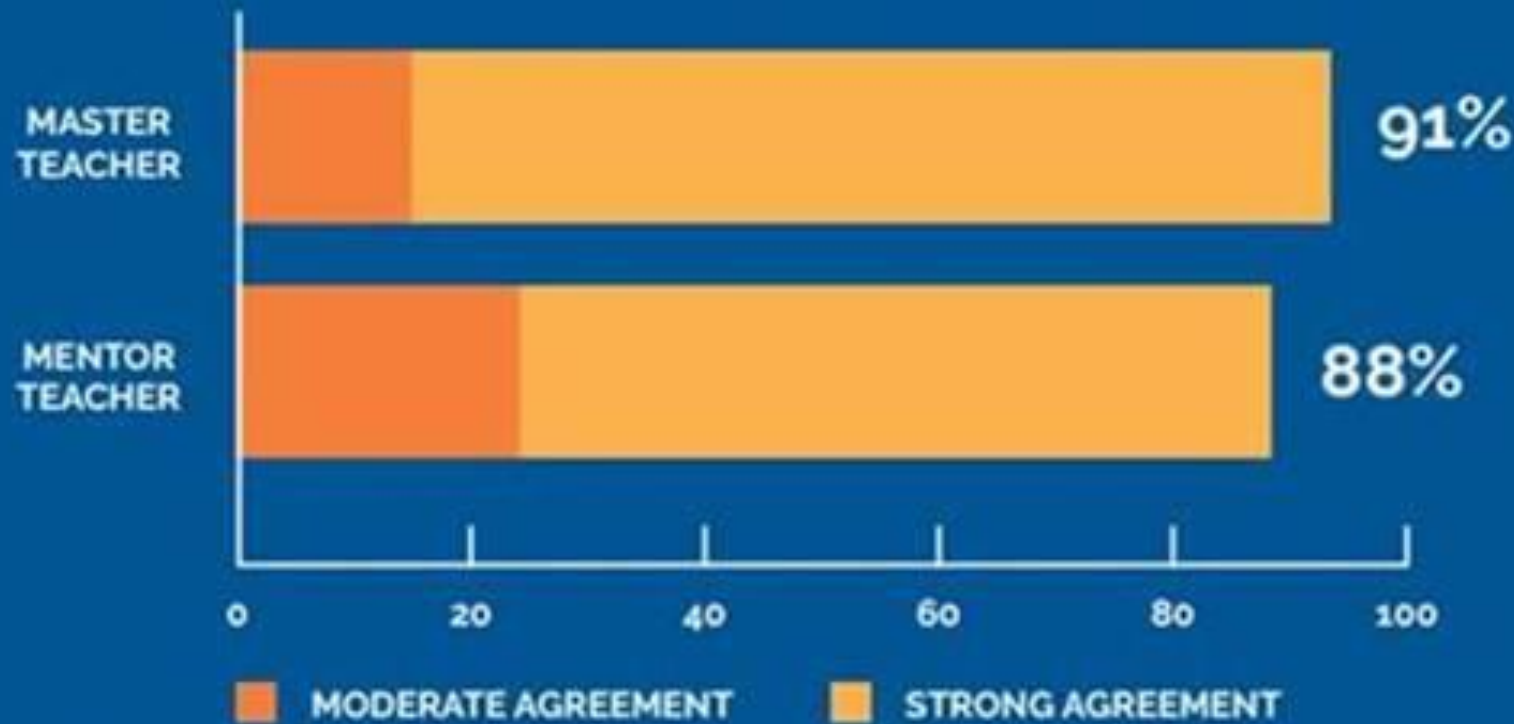
# Why do we need teacher leaders?

It's a real gift to have that kind of teacher leadership. I can try things and we can be reflective together.

*Says a Goshen, Indiana classroom teacher about the support she receives from the teacher leaders in her building.*

# Increased teacher leader opportunities impact teacher retention

*"With the addition of multiple career paths, I am more likely to remain in the teaching profession longer."*



*"Teacher leadership gives people the opportunity to feel appreciated and valued and gives them that affirmation that you're doing a good job, that you have strengths and can share those. Whenever you can give people that affirmation of 'you're doing a good job' and 'keep it up,' and that what you're doing is working, it is definitely going to attract people and keep them in the profession longer."*

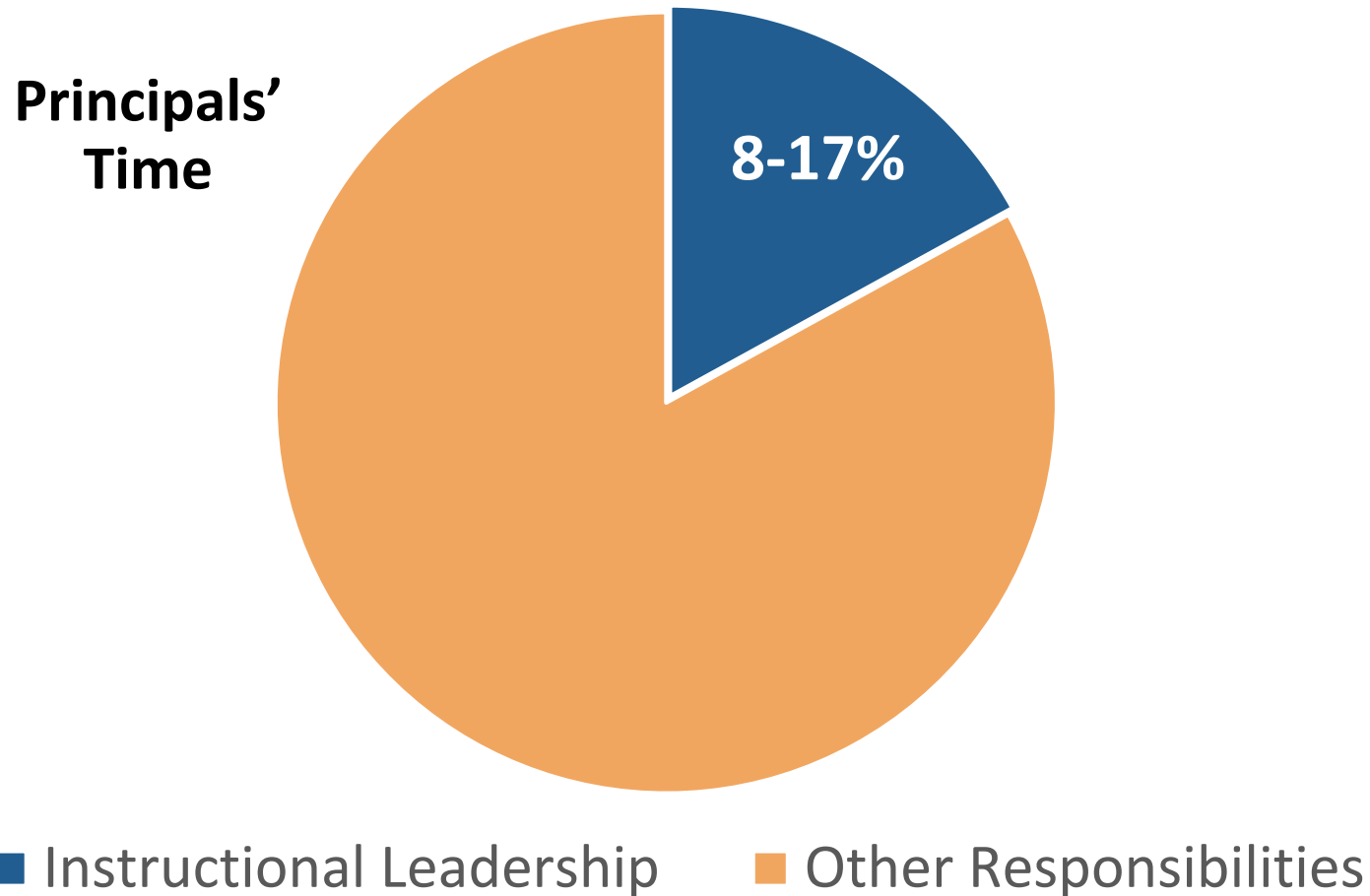
# Teachers want leadership opportunities connected to classroom instruction

The 2013 MetLife Survey of the American Teacher found

**51%** of all teachers are at least somewhat interested in “teaching in the classroom part-time combined with other roles and responsibilities”

**16%** who were similarly interested in becoming a school principal

# Principals are spread too thin



Simply put, principals lack the time, and sometimes the instructional expertise, to single-handedly provide effective instructional leadership in their schools.

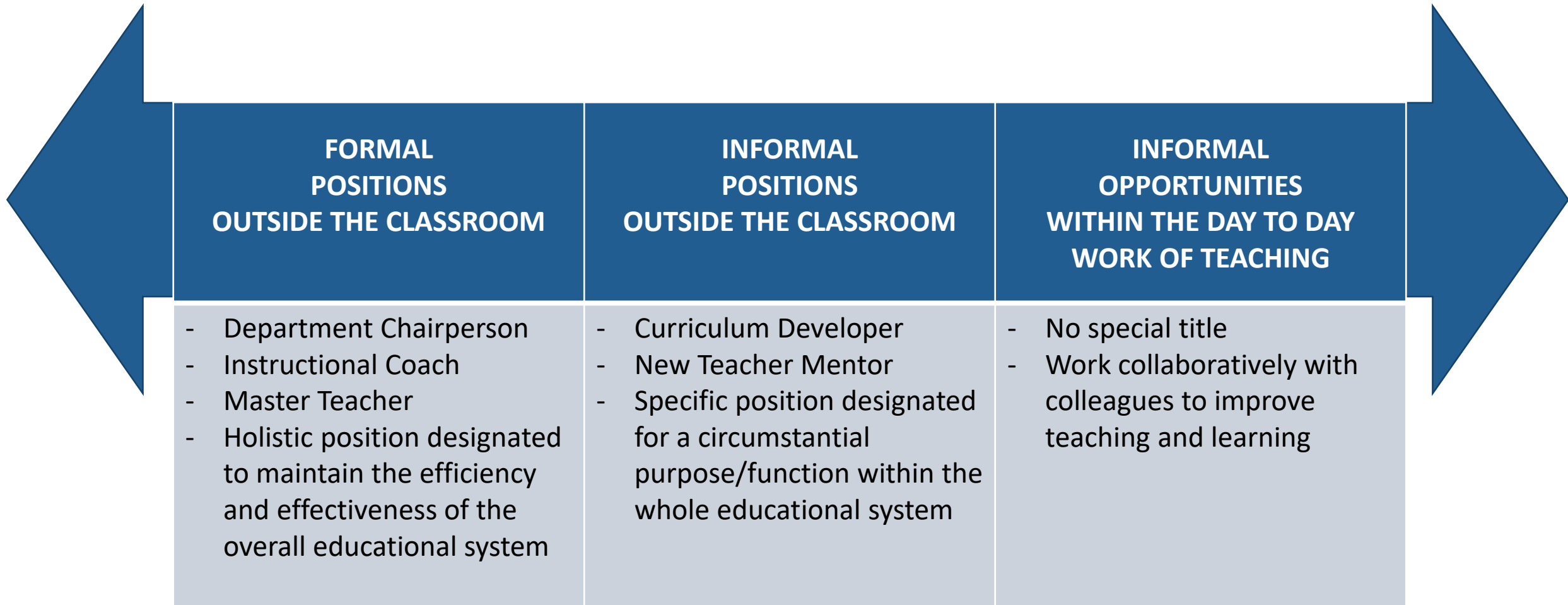
# What is a teacher leader?

As a teacher leader, I get “a pulse of all the classrooms. The students get to see me also as someone who invests in our teachers as a means to invest in their success as well.”

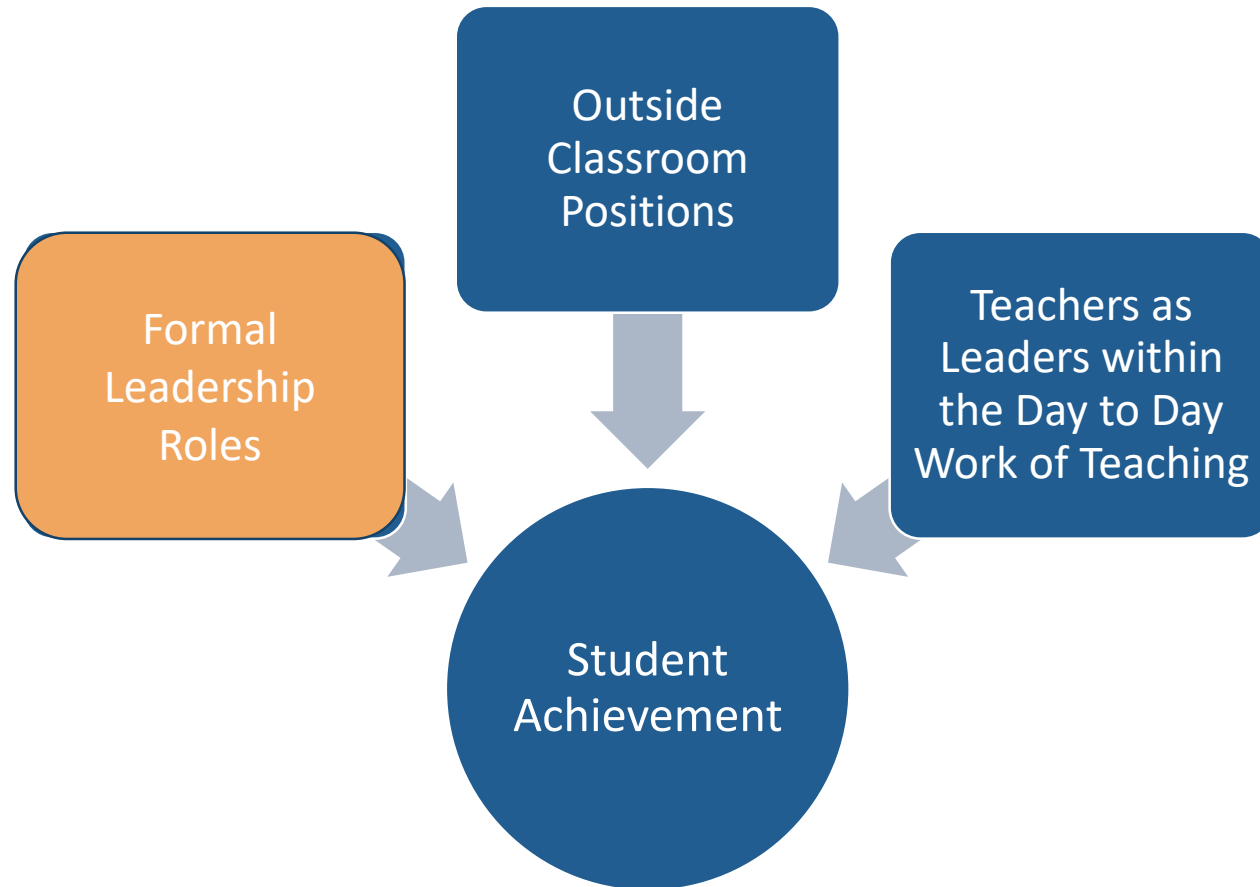
*Kevin Greve, master teacher, Brown County School Corporation*



# Continuum of Teacher Leadership Roles



# Impact of Teacher Leadership Roles



Which of these roles has the biggest impact on student achievement?

Why?

- Right people
- Right training and support
- Right responsibility and accountability

# 9 Elements of Formal Teacher Leadership Roles

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1) Rigorous, competitive selection process</b> |  |
| <b>2) Training and ongoing support</b>            |  |
| <b>3) Span of responsibility</b>                  |  |
| <b>4) Grounded in classroom teaching</b>          |  |
| <b>5) Integration into leadership structures</b>  |  |

# 9 Elements of Formal Teacher Leadership Roles

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>6) Time</b>                        |  |
| <b>7) Compensation</b>                |  |
| <b>8) Professional authority</b>      |  |
| <b>9) Professional accountability</b> |  |

My day-to-day work as a Master Teacher consisted of working and teaching in many classes. I did not value simply visiting classes. I valued the work where my sleeves were rolled up and I was working alongside students and teachers. Teachers' students became my students and WE began to work together to think about how our work was specifically impacting student achievement. I knew all 17 teachers' students by name (over 200 students). I spent time talking about the students and their goals. I became strategic as I field-tested [teaching and learning] strategies in order to ensure that these strategies would yield results, and then shared those strategies with teachers and students across the entire school.

*Laura Roussel, former Louisiana Master Teacher*

# TEACHER LEADER ROLES IN COLLABORATION AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- Schoolwide Leadership Team
- Teacher Collaborative Teams
- Classrooms



From a financial perspective, it's been wonderful, because bringing in external folks to provide professional development was really expensive. And teachers would often wonder, 'Well, who is this? What do they know about what I'm dealing with here at Partnership Academy on a Tuesday?' But the teacher leaders you're working alongside all of the time know their stuff and they know the context, so teachers are eager to engage right away. 'Now this is someone who really knows what challenges I face and can offer some learning tied to my context.' You can't have professional development be ongoing, frequent, contextualized, and relevant when you have to rely on somebody else's external schedule. By the time you get them in, you've moved on and the issue is not even an issue anymore. Having Master and Mentor Teachers deliver professional development gives you the flexibility to meet the needs of teachers and students every week.

*Lisa Hendricks Founder and Executive Director*

# How do I get started?

Creating a system for teachers to assume formal leadership structures will ultimately improve teacher and administrator performance. These improvements will not only bring our district into alignment, but will ultimately lead to increased student achievement. Adding teacher leadership structures will only make an already good district great.

*Dr. Kyle Barrentine, superintendent, Nettle Creek School Corporation*



# Keys to Getting Started/Success

1. Design formal teacher leadership responsibilities to encompass all of the main schoolwide systems for improving instruction.
2. Select teacher leaders who have the right set of accomplishments, skills and dispositions to succeed.
3. Provide teacher leaders with training and ongoing support focused on specific job responsibilities.
4. Empower teacher leaders by adopting common tools and protocols, including a research-based instructional framework or rubric.

# Design formal teacher leadership responsibilities to encompass all of the main schoolwide systems for improving instruction.

- The role is designed to focus squarely on improving teaching and accelerating student learning
- The responsibilities encompass all of the main schoolwide systems for improving instruction with significant responsibility for
  - managing and implementing research-proven, high-impact levers for improving instruction
  - leading collaborative learning teams
  - conducting formal observations to provide useful feedback to teachers
  - ensuring that all teachers benefit from classroom-based coaching

# Select teacher leaders who have the right set of accomplishments, skills and dispositions to succeed.

- Not bestowed on more senior teachers with long experience
- Competitive selection based on explicit job-related criteria and the quest for the relatively rare combination of skills and attributes to successfully navigate the role
  - Superior expertise in student instruction
  - Credible evidence of demonstrable success teaching students
  - Skill in leading and guiding adult learners
  - Growth mindset about their own and others' professional practice

“Too often we assume that competent, credible, and approachable teachers, who have instructional proficiency with their own students are ready to be leaders; this assumes they should know how to work with other adults, understand the change process in schools, grasp the potential to challenges of their leadership work.”

*Katzmeyer & Moller, 2009*

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It's important for students to see a model in their classrooms as somebody that's continuing to grow. So when we're in classrooms coaching a teacher and students are witnessing that, that's a great example for them to know that learning doesn't stop... Students definitely recognize us and know our presence within the classroom. That impact on students alone and the whole idea that teachers are willing to grow and change is a model for students to then know growth and learning doesn't ever end and it has an impact on them. They want to grow, too, and I see that growth.

*Teacher Leader in Iowa*

# Provide teacher leaders with training and ongoing support focused on specific job responsibilities.

- Specialized upfront training and ongoing support are necessary to fulfill specific responsibilities of the role
  - Meeting the needs of adult learners in job-embedded professional development
  - Coaching teachers across a variety of content and grade levels
  - Field-testing instructional strategies in classrooms at your school
  - Leading collaborative teacher teams to improve student outcomes
  - Conducting classroom observations to provide instructional feedback

# Empower teacher leaders by adopting common tools and protocols, including a research-based instructional framework or rubric.

Establishing a shared vision and common language to high quality instruction:

- Provides teacher leaders with critical scaffolding for doing their jobs well, and they relieve new teacher leaders from having to “reinvent the wheel”
- Provides a shared understanding for collaboration to achieve excellent instruction
- Enable teachers to experience consistency in instructional leadership approaches when teacher leader positions turn over
- Allow teacher leaders within and across schools to share a common approach to performing common tasks, enabling them to share ideas and grow their professional practice together

# The call to action

Principals/school leaders are faced with 3 options:

Do everything themselves or with a few teachers they select for informal roles

Sit back and let instructional leadership occur in a chaotic manner

Intentionally plan and facilitate the process of collaborative leadership with formalized teacher leader roles

# Final Reflection

Engage in a final reflection and record your thoughts on your handout in the space provided.

- What is one take-away from today for me as a school leader?
- What is my next step as I consider teacher leadership roles in my building(s)?



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