INSIDE THIS GUIDE

TEACHER LEADERSHIP p. 2

EXAMINING ROLES p. 3

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS p. 5

4 A’S PROTOCOL p. 8

Cover suitable for binder sleeves, front, and spine p. 9
An exciting time for teacher leadership

By Jacqueline Kennedy

This issue of JSD focuses on the dynamic and newly conceptualized role of teacher leaders throughout systems, schools, and classrooms. Their role in sustaining and supporting long-term, deep transformation is illustrated throughout this issue. Their reach, as authors share, expands beyond classroom instruction to strengthening school culture and ensuring equitable instruction. It is, as one author describes, a bold move that requires a new way of thinking about teachers and leadership, making this an exciting time to step into teacher leadership.

Regardless of the varied job titles and hats that teacher leaders wear, they serve their colleagues through modeling, facilitation, advocacy, and support. The impact of teacher leadership can be observed in their passion for learning, commitment to collaboration, and shared vision. While teacher leadership can be vital to supporting students and teachers, the teacher leader’s role remains one with its own set of difficulties and barriers. Authors in this issue do not shy away from describing both the challenges and rewards of teacher leadership. This issue describes the knowledge and skills needed for teacher leaders to be successful in meeting the demands of their unique roles, and identifies appropriate steps they can take to manage their roles effectively. It also defines the standards and opportunities that can advance teachers into leadership roles. Teachers, administrators, and school system leaders are all challenged to step up, advocate, influence, and encourage teachers to become informal and formal leaders, in and out of the classroom.
Examining roles

Based on the articles in this issue, use the roles of teacher leaders defined in the table below and on the following page to identify and align attributes, organize key ideas, and use as a reference during future discussions. The questions that follow the table are intended to prompt reflection on the key ideas shared by each author and to explore how to apply them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER LEADER ROLES</th>
<th>KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS</th>
<th>BENEFITS</th>
<th>CONSIDERATIONS</th>
<th>SOURCE ARTICLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource provider</td>
<td>To expand teachers' use of a variety of resources to improve instruction.</td>
<td>Based on your reading of the articles, what are the knowledge and skills required of teacher leaders?</td>
<td>How does this role of the teacher leader serve the school community? What evidence supports this?</td>
<td>Before embarking on this role, what steps should be taken?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data coach</td>
<td>To ensure that student achievement data drives instructional decisions at the classroom and school level.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum specialist</td>
<td>To increase the quality and effectiveness of classroom instruction.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional specialist</td>
<td>To align instruction with curriculum to meet the needs of all students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom supporter</td>
<td>To increase the quality and effectiveness of classroom instruction.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHER LEADER ROLES</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS</td>
<td>BENEFITS</td>
<td>CONSIDERATIONS</td>
<td>SOURCE ARTICLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentor</strong></td>
<td>Based on your reading of the articles, what are the knowledge and skills required of teacher leaders?</td>
<td>How does this role of the teacher leader serve the school community? What evidence supports this?</td>
<td>Before embarking on this role, what steps should be taken?</td>
<td>Which article(s) focus on this role and provide a model?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning facilitator</strong></td>
<td>To design collaborative, job-embedded, standards-based professional learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School leader</strong></td>
<td>To work collaboratively with the school’s formal leadership to design, implement, and assess change initiatives to ensure alignment and focus on intended results.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catalyst for change</strong></td>
<td>To create disequilibrium with the current state as an impetus to explore alternatives to current practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learner</strong></td>
<td>To model continuous learning, to keep current, and to be a thought leader in the school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion questions

1. The theme of this issue of JSD is teacher leadership. Teachers that choose to make a difference beyond the classroom now have opportunities to move into leadership roles to build capacity in others and foster collective responsibility for improved student achievement. Their role in collaborating and sharing expertise with teachers, principals, and central office staff leverages a partnership designed to strengthen teachers’ practice and increase student learning. What essential features of teacher leadership did you read about in the articles? What ideas or viewpoints were surprising? What new ideas would be interesting to explore further?

2. Schools are dependent on teacher leaders’ abilities to acquire and demonstrate various competencies. Using the summary table provided above, select the knowledge and skills that are areas for growth among your school staff, colleagues, or peers. How might this list inform system and school improvement planning? In what ways could this inform future professional learning?

3. The Urban Leadership Academy (p. 26) demonstrates how teacher leaders build on the strengths of their colleagues by empowering them to lead equity-focused change. How are teacher leadership and equity connected? What other tools are available for fostering empowerment? Which stage in the five-stage empowerment trajectory could be used as a springboard in your context to introduce opportunities to create the conditions for meeting the needs of the diverse learner?

4. Districts often explore partnerships between schools and universities to maximize professional learning. How does the partnership between Boston Public Schools and its university partners develop and refine teacher leaders (p. 32)? What other partnerships could be valuable for strengthening teacher leaders and build capacity?
5. Teacher leaders face many challenges that can affect school culture, including building a classroom support team inclusive of teacher assistants, ensuring collaboration while moving beyond artificial conversations, and gaining trust while establishing expertise. How does the culture change when teachers begin to take an active role? How can you use these findings share them with others?

6. Cognitive dissonance can be productive to explore alternate ways to think about critical challenges and actions. MacDonald (p. 45) describes ways to recognize, respond, and follow up after skillfully facilitating a team meeting. To achieve the meaningful dialogue necessary to move improvement efforts along, list additional strategies you can explore to assist teacher leaders to move beyond common barriers and resistance. What processes do you and your peers need to establish and monitor these strategies?

7. By increasing the emphasis on their status as peers, and deemphasizing their role as experts, teacher leaders have an opportunity to influence teachers’ practice in a nonsupervisory capacity. This tightrope is one that teacher leaders must learn to navigate carefully. Mangin and Stoelinga (p. 48) acknowledge this paradoxical challenge and share guidance on how the two roles as trusted colleague and instructional expert exist side by side.

8. Consequently, when the conditions are created to maximize their effectiveness, teacher leaders can thrive. What is the value of addressing these paradoxes directly? What role does everyone have in creating the conditions to maximize the effectiveness of those in these very dynamic roles?
9. Without the capacity to retain and attract new teacher leaders, organizations lose valuable resources of untapped potential. Sometimes the most unassuming teachers are clear candidates for teacher leadership, but can often be overlooked. Meanwhile, other teachers may be well on their way to becoming influential teacher leaders and not know what their roles might become. What do districts and schools need to do to encourage and celebrate teacher leaders for the impact they are making in schools? How can they recognize potential future leaders? Review current processes or create a protocol to identify and recruit potential teacher leaders.

10. The standards serve to describe the knowledge and skills needed by the teacher leader to transform schools to meet the demands of the 21st century. Use the 4 A’s Protocol on the following page to note areas in need of improvement as defined by the domain and functions included in each of the Teacher Leader Model Standards (p. 16). These standards can serve as a resource for discussion, planning, and reflection. Complete this task individually or collectively in teams to encourage next steps for professional learning.
4 A’s Protocol

PURPOSE
The purpose of this protocol is to allow all voices to be heard and reinforced as participants grapple with the text from differing perspectives. Teams will derive a deeper understanding of the text and of its ramifications, resulting in more focus and validity to apply to the work ahead.

PROCESS
1. Independently, read the Teacher Leader Model Standards (pp. 18-24), highlighting and writing notes in the margin using the symbols provided in answer to the following four questions.
   - **Agreements:** Which parts of the text do you agree with in terms of your work? *Mark with “+”*
   - **Aspirations:** Which parts of the text do you aspire to? Or want to work toward? *Mark with “!”*
   - **Alignments:** What is the current reality, and what is the gap between where we are and our aspirations? *Mark with “@”*
   - **Adjustments:** What needs to be done to succeed? *Mark with “”*

2. In a round, have each person identify one agreement in the text, citing the text (with page numbers, if appropriate) as evidence.

3. Either continue in rounds or facilitate a conversation in which the group talks about the text in light of each of the remaining A’s, taking them one at a time — what do people want to aspire to, align with, and adjust to in the text?

4. Try to move seamlessly from one A to the next, giving each A enough time for full exploration.

5. End the session with an open discussion framed around a question such as: What does this mean for our work with students?

6. Debrief the text experience and allow individuals to share any new insights or follow-up ideas they have as a result of this dialogue.
JSD Professional Learning Guide

A bimonthly collection of tools to help educators expand their knowledge and learn about new practices through collaborative reflection