



All educators have a responsibility — as well as opportunities — to show leadership

Skillful leadership is essential to effective professional learning. Without it, professional learning will fail to achieve its intended outcomes.

Every staff member has a responsibility to exercise skillful leadership. And, while it may not be part of a formal job description, all educators have opportunities to exercise leadership and impact professional learning. In fact, some of the most powerful opportunities to advance professional learning's impact are seized by those without formal authority or responsibility.

EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership by educators surfaces in many ways. Here are examples.

A **teacher** voices a concern in a faculty meeting about plans for a full day of team-building exercises for an upcoming professional development day. She and her fellow teachers believe there are more pressing instructional challenges that demand the attention of the entire staff.

An **instructional coach** challenges a grade-level team of teachers to assume collective responsibility for all students in the grade level rather than expressing concern and empathy for the new teachers who seem to have been assigned a larger percentage of

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challenging students.

A **mentor** argues with senior teachers for greater support for new teachers, including smaller class size, more time for professional learning and support, and opportunities to observe and be observed by other members of her team.

A **principal** recognizes the value of teacher leadership and organizes a school leadership team. She ensures that professional learning is a regular part of each meeting.

A **social worker** joins a learning team because he recognizes that this team has many students with exceptional needs and he wants to share his expertise and support the use of relevant strategies in the classroom.

A **teacher** who is the only person assigned to an advanced course joins a statewide network of teachers who share her assignment because she recognizes that she needs assistance from beyond her school and system. She knows her students will benefit when she taps external expertise and puts it into practice.

A **principal** calls on his superintendent, who is committed to professional learning communities for teachers. He asks for facilitation and time to support professional learning communities for principals in the system.

THREE KEY IDEAS

Each of these educators exhibits one of the three key ideas outlined in

the professional learning standard on leadership.

They develop capacity for their own learning and leading. As leaders, they are voracious learners. They assume responsibility for learning for themselves and their colleagues. They demand professional learning be effective and focused on substantive results for themselves, their colleagues, and their students.

They advocate for professional learning. As leaders, they make their own career-long learning visible to others. They participate in learning networks and other structures within and beyond their own work environment. They articulate their assumptions and beliefs, and their actions model the attitudes and behaviors they expect of all educators.

They create support systems and structures. As leaders, they establish or advocate for organizational systems and structures that make effective professional learning possible. As leaders, they influence other policymakers and decision makers to attain the support for professional learning necessary to achieve its potential.

Each of the big ideas represented in the Leadership standard is relevant for all educators. We have every right to expect them of others as well as ourselves. When all stakeholders in a system see themselves as leaders of professional learning, there is no limit to the results we can achieve. ■