



## Oh, the places teachers will go

In the classic children's picture book by Dr. Seuss (1990), *Oh, The Places You'll Go*, readers are taken on a whimsical adventure with a cheerful pajama-wearing boy as he makes his way into an ever-changing world, full of new pathways and discoveries. During his travels he experiences challenges, difficult decisions, sticky situations, and lots of excitement and fun. In the end, the character discovers a few inspiring lessons: Choose a path, make things happen, and enjoy the journey.

In a similar fashion, the Standards for Professional Learning provide practical guidance to each professional learning journey. Serving as a teacher leader is both challenging and rewarding, due in part to its multi-faceted and dynamic role. However, it is ever-changing and can lead to new pathways for teacher leaders and the

individuals, teams, and schools they support.

The Leadership standard specifically informs the work of teacher leaders, encouraging them to design roadmaps for their own learning and leading. It describes the essential elements for supporting professional learning and significant school change to increase results for all students.

As you examine the role of professional learning and begin to chart your own path, consider the lessons from Dr. Seuss.

### Choose a path and get started

Which path best makes learning a top priority? Examine your options and then get started. As a teacher leader, how can you share your learning goals and demonstrate your commitment to learning? Actively participate in professional learning. Ask for feedback from colleagues and administrators. Expand your knowledge and skills as a leader or coach by observing others and seek to understand the latest research on professional learning. Also, acknowledge your responsibility to develop others. As you model how a leader puts his or her own learning first, be sure to set high expectations for yourself, others, and for all students.

### Be proactive; don't always wait for things to happen

Although the road may be bumpy with "bang-ups" and "hang-ups,"

teacher leaders can make things happen to ensure quality professional learning. Help others understand the critical link between professional learning and student achievement by challenging practice and ineffective professional learning. Work with the principal and colleagues to identify alternative, research-based approaches to make necessary improvements. Work through whatever channels you have to create time for learning and identify the resources you and your colleagues need to support your development. Use your voice, from wherever you sit, to proclaim the role of professional learning in moving schools where they need to go.

### Enjoy the journey

Give yourself permission to have fun along the way. Enjoy your role as a teacher leader knowing you will gain experiences that will enrich and inform your work. As you learn with others, create and share your own lessons about the culture and conditions necessary for you to support your colleagues effectively. The more you share what you've learned, the more your peers will also grow as leaders and as learners.

### REFERENCE

Dr. Seuss. (1990). *Oh, the places you'll go*. New York: Random House.

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