



**By the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium**

**L**eadership by teachers is essential to serving the needs of students, schools, and the teaching profession. To that end, the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium has developed Teacher Leader Model Standards to codify, promote, and support teacher leadership as a vehicle to transform schools for the needs of the 21st century.

The Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium invites the profession, the public, and stakeholders to engage in dialogue about the various forms and dimensions of teacher leadership as well as the variety of contexts in which teacher leadership can be vital to serving the needs of students, schools, and the teaching profession.

The Teacher Leader Model Standards can be used to guide the preparation of experienced teachers to assume leadership roles such as resource providers, instructional specialists, curriculum specialists, classroom supporters, learning facilitators, mentors, school team leaders, and data coaches (Killion & Harrison, 2006).

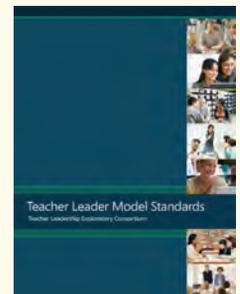
They can also serve to reinforce the role of higher education in preparing

preservice teachers to become members of professional learning communities and develop critical skills of inquiry, communication, and facilitation.

We describe the knowledge base needed by the teacher leader in order to meet the performance expectations related to each domain. The functions then describe in more detail key actions and practices related to each domain. It is not expected that an individual teacher leader should or could embody the many dimensions of teacher leadership outlined in the teacher leader model standards. There are many contexts in which teachers can assume leadership roles, and it is our hope that the Teacher Leader Model Standards will help expand opportunities for leadership

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The full standards document includes vignettes of teacher leadership, considerations and strategies for policies and practices that support standards implementation, glossary of terms, and a crosswalk between these standards and the ISLLC 2008 Educational Leadership Policy Standards.



within the teaching profession.

The Teacher Leader Model Standards consist of seven domains describing the many dimensions of teacher leadership:

- **Domain I:** Fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning.
- **Domain II:** Accessing and using research to improve practice and student achievement.
- **Domain III:** Promoting professional learning for continuous improvement.
- **Domain IV:** Facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning.
- **Domain V:** Using assessments and data for school and district improvement.
- **Domain VI:** Improving outreach and collaboration with families and community.
- **Domain VII:** Advocating for student learning and the profession.

#### NEW PARADIGM FOR TEACHING

When the status quo is no longer an option at a struggling school, and the consequence of conformity yields persistent failure, it is time to move to a shared leadership model. Teacher leaders believe that all students can succeed. They also believe that all teachers need collaborative support to help students realize success (Robbins & Ramos-Pell, 2010).

Teacher leadership is an idea that is long overdue. Teacher leadership opportunities can help recruit talented individuals into the profession who might not otherwise go into teaching. Research indicates that in order to increase the likelihood that Gen Y teachers remain in the profession, they need opportunities to participate in decision making at the school and district level; a positive and supportive school culture that fosters teamwork and effective lines of communication; professional opportunities that include collaboration and technology; in-depth feedback and support from administrators and colleagues; time for regular collaboration; and fair pay and a differentiated pay structure that includes rewarding outstanding performance, acquiring new knowledge and skills, and assuming new roles and responsibilities (Behrstock & Clifford, 2009).

Furthermore, we must use the expertise that already exists in the teaching force by ensuring opportunities for recognition and specific leadership roles for those desiring the added responsibilities that come with leadership. We hope the Teacher Leader Model Standards in this document are a significant step in delineating the knowledge, skills, and competencies that teachers need in order to assume leadership roles in their schools, districts, and the profession.

#### ABOUT THE TEACHER LEADERSHIP EXPLORATORY CONSORTIUM

In May 2008, a group of concerned educators convened to examine current research and thinking about the critical leadership roles that teachers play in contributing to student and school success. These educators believe that teacher leadership is a potentially powerful strategy to promote effective, collaborative teaching practices in schools that lead to increased student achievement, improve decision making at the school and district level, and create a dynamic teaching profession for the 21st century.

This initial group subsequently expanded its membership and mission to form the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, which represents a broad array of education organizations, state education agencies, teacher leaders, principals, superintendents, and institutions of higher education (find a list of members in the full, online version of this document). This expanded group embarked on the development of model standards for teacher leadership in August 2008 and has now completed its work.

The purpose of these standards — like all model standards — is to stimulate dialogue among stakeholders of the teaching profession about what constitutes the knowledge, skills, and competencies that teachers need to assume leadership roles in their schools, districts, and the profession.

Model standards are often used in the development of curriculum, professional development, and standards for such entities as school districts, states, professional organizations, and institutions of higher education. These standards are designed to encourage professional discussion about what constitutes the full range of competencies that teacher leaders possess and how this form of leadership can be distinguished from, but work in tandem with, formal administrative leadership roles to support good teaching and promote student learning.

#### REFERENCES

- Behrstock, E. & Clifford, M. (2009, February).** *Leading Gen Y teachers: Emerging strategies for school leaders*. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. Available at [www.tqsource.org/publications/February2009Brief.pdf](http://www.tqsource.org/publications/February2009Brief.pdf).
- Killion, J. & Harrison, C. (2006).** *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches*. Oxford, OH: NSDC.
- Robbins, P. & Ramos-Pell, A. (2010).** *Shared leadership: A key to student achievement in an underperforming school*. Phoenix, AZ: University of Phoenix College of Education. Available at [http://cdn-static.phoenix.edu/content/dam/altcloud/doc/Teacher\\_Leadership\\_White\\_Paper.pdf](http://cdn-static.phoenix.edu/content/dam/altcloud/doc/Teacher_Leadership_White_Paper.pdf).



## Fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning.

The teacher leader understands the principles of adult learning and knows how to develop a collaborative culture of collective responsibility in the school.

The teacher leader uses this knowledge to promote an environment of collegiality, trust, and respect that focuses on continuous improvement in instruction and student learning.

### **Functions**

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Utilizes group processes to help colleagues\* work collaboratively to solve problems, make decisions, manage conflict, and promote meaningful change;
- b. Models effective skills in listening, presenting ideas, leading discussions, clarifying, mediating, and identifying the needs of self and others in order to advance shared goals and professional learning;
- c. Employs facilitation skills to create trust among colleagues, develop collective wisdom, build ownership and action that supports student learning;
- d. Strives to create an inclusive culture where diverse perspectives are welcomed in addressing challenges; and
- e. Uses knowledge and understanding of different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and languages to promote effective interactions among colleagues.

\* By colleagues, we mean members of the school community, including teachers, administrators, specialists, and others involved in the education of children at the school or district level.





## Accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning.

The teacher leader understands how research creates new knowledge, informs policies and practices, and improves teaching and learning. The teacher leader models and facilitates the use of systematic inquiry as a critical component of teachers' ongoing learning and development.

### Functions

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Assists colleagues in accessing and using research in order to select appropriate strategies to improve student learning;
- b. Facilitates the analysis of student learning data, collaborative interpretation of results, and application of findings to improve teaching and learning;
- c. Supports colleagues in collaborating with higher education institutions and other organizations engaged in researching critical educational issues; and
- d. Teaches and supports colleagues to collect, analyze, and communicate data from their classrooms to improve teaching and learning.





## Promoting professional learning for continuous improvement.

The teacher leader understands the evolving nature of teaching and learning, established and emerging technologies, and the school community.

The teacher leader uses this knowledge to promote, design, and facilitate job-embedded professional learning aligned with school improvement goals.

### Functions

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Collaborates with colleagues and school administrators to plan professional learning that is team-based, job-embedded, sustained over time, aligned with content standards, and linked to school/district improvement goals;
- b. Uses information about adult learning to respond to the diverse learning needs of colleagues by identifying, promoting, and facilitating varied and differentiated professional learning;
- c. Facilitates professional learning among colleagues;
- d. Identifies and uses appropriate technologies to promote collaborative and differentiated professional learning;
- e. Works with colleagues to collect, analyze, and disseminate data related to the quality of professional learning and its effect on teaching and student learning;
- f. Advocates for sufficient preparation, time, and support for colleagues to work in teams to engage in job-embedded professional learning;
- g. Provides constructive feedback to colleagues to strengthen teaching practice and improve student learning; and
- h. Uses information about emerging education, economic, and social trends in planning and facilitating professional learning.





## Facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning.

The teacher leader demonstrates a deep understanding of the teaching and learning processes and uses this knowledge to advance the professional skills of colleagues by being a continuous learner and modeling reflective practice based on student results. The teacher leader works collaboratively with colleagues to ensure instructional practices are aligned to a shared vision, mission, and goals.

### Functions

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Facilitates the collection, analysis, and use of classroom- and school-based data to identify opportunities to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment, school organization, and school culture;
- b. Engages in reflective dialogue with colleagues based on observation of instruction, student work, and assessment data and helps make connections to research-based effective practices;
- c. Supports colleagues' individual and collective reflection and professional growth by serving in roles such as a mentor, coach, and content facilitator;
- d. Serves as a team leader to harness the skills, expertise, and knowledge of colleagues to address curricular expectations and student learning needs;
- e. Uses knowledge of existing and emerging technologies to guide colleagues in helping students skillfully and appropriately navigate the universe of knowledge available on the Internet, use social media to promote collaborative learning, and connect with people and resources around the globe; and
- f. Promotes instructional strategies that address issues of diversity and equity in the classroom and ensures that individual student learning needs remain the central focus of instruction.





## Promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement.

The teacher leader is knowledgeable about current research on classroom- and school-based data and the design and selection of appropriate formative and summative assessment methods. The teacher leader shares this knowledge and collaborates with colleagues to use assessment and other data to make informed decisions that improve learning for all students and to inform school and district improvement strategies.

### **Functions**

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Increases the capacity of colleagues to identify and use multiple assessment tools aligned to state and local standards;
- b. Collaborates with colleagues in the design, implementation, scoring, and interpretation of student data to improve educational practice and student learning;
- c. Creates a climate of trust and critical reflection in order to engage colleagues in challenging conversations about student learning data that lead to solutions to identified issues; and
- d. Works with colleagues to use assessment and data findings to promote changes in instructional practices or organizational structures to improve student learning.





## Improving outreach and collaboration with families and community.

The teacher leader understands that families, cultures, and communities have a significant impact on educational processes and student learning. The teacher leader works with colleagues to promote ongoing systematic collaboration with families, community members, business and community leaders, and other stakeholders to improve the educational system and expand opportunities for student learning.

### **Functions**

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Uses knowledge and understanding of the different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and languages in the school community to promote effective interactions among colleagues, families, and the larger community;
- b. Models and teaches effective communication and collaboration skills with families and other stakeholders focused on attaining equitable achievement for students of all backgrounds and circumstances;
- c. Facilitates colleagues' self-examination of their own understandings of community culture and diversity and how they can develop culturally responsive strategies to enrich the educational experiences of students and achieve high levels of learning for all students;
- d. Develops a shared understanding among colleagues of the diverse educational needs of families and the community; and
- e. Collaborates with families, communities, and colleagues to develop comprehensive strategies to address the diverse educational needs of families and the community.





## Advocating for student learning and the profession.

The teacher leader understands how educational policy is made at the local, state, and national level as well as the roles of school leaders, boards of education, legislators, and other stakeholders in formulating those policies.

The teacher leader uses this knowledge to advocate for student needs and for practices that support effective teaching and increase student learning, and serves as an individual of influence and respect within the school, community, and profession.

### Functions

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Shares information with colleagues within and/or beyond the district regarding how local, state, and national trends and policies can impact classroom practices and expectations for student learning;
- b. Works with colleagues to identify and use research to advocate for teaching and learning processes that meet the needs of all students;
- c. Collaborates with colleagues to select appropriate opportunities to advocate for the rights and/or needs of students, to secure additional resources within the building or district that support student learning, and to communicate effectively with targeted audiences such as parents and community members;
- d. Advocates for access to professional resources, including financial support and human and other material resources, that allow colleagues to spend significant time learning about effective practices and developing a professional learning community focused on school improvement goals; and
- e. Represents and advocates for the profession in contexts outside of the classroom.

