

# Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework



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**Department of  
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## Introduction

Teacher leaders are essential to the advancement of teaching and learning in Ohio's schools. Teacher leader involvement at the state and local levels ensures that the expertise and skills of those who work most closely with students are positioned to have voice and input on school improvement efforts. Teacher leaders help drive efforts for change and improvement in Ohio's schools and enhance student success.

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce recognizes the importance of teacher leadership and acknowledges that Ohio has many programs and initiatives that support it. Though not exhaustive, the list below highlights several of the current teacher leadership programs and initiatives.



- [Ohio Teacher Leadership](#)
- [Education Program Finder](#)
- [Master Teacher](#)
- [Lead Professional Educator Licenses](#) and [Senior Professional Educator Licenses](#)
- [Resident Educator Program](#)
- [Ohio Teacher of the Year](#)
- [Ohio Improvement Process Team Structures](#)

To ensure that these initiatives and other programs are sustainable and successful, the state needs a common understanding of teacher leadership. The Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework establishes this understanding to advance and expand teacher leadership in Ohio's schools and educational system.

## The Vision for Teacher Leadership in Ohio

This Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework showcases the Department's commitment to promoting and advancing teacher leadership in Ohio's schools. This shared vision highlights the expectation that teacher leaders hold the expertise to lead and expand the professional learning opportunities and supports available to fellow educators, enabling them to strengthen the profession and enhance student success. The framework aims to provide more opportunities for teacher leadership in schools and districts.

In 2017, The Department collaborated with Ohio teachers and administrators, educator associations, and the Ohio Department of Higher Education to design the framework. The Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework seeks to present the central components of teacher leadership in Ohio while also recognizing the diverse forms (both formal and informal) of teacher leadership that already exist in Ohio's schools and districts.

*“States and districts are leveraging teacher leadership in multiple ways to professionalize teaching, creating opportunities for teacher career advancement, facilitate school improvement, and facilitate professional learning for educator and student success.”*

—Killion et al., 2016



## Defining Teacher Leadership in Ohio

Teacher leaders are teachers who, while remaining in the classroom, take on additional leadership responsibilities beyond their own classroom with other teachers as well as district, state, and national leaders, to advance the profession with the ultimate goal of enhancing student success. Teacher leaders contribute to their educational community through their support of professional learning, involvement in decision-making, and improved instructional practice (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). This contribution can take on various forms in day-to-day activities, but remains centered on the idea of leading from the classroom while collaborating with colleagues to influence the larger educational community.

## The Necessary Conditions for Successful Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership can flourish when the right conditions are in place, including both cultural and structural factors (Danielson, 2006; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Successful implementation of teacher leadership in Ohio requires acknowledging and addressing cultural and structural factors.

### Cultural Factors

For the concept of teacher leadership to thrive, the culture and mindset of the local and state educational system must be amenable to it. Stakeholders at all levels must believe in and commit to it, and they must be open to shifts in culture and leadership direction.



Perhaps most important is the condition of distributive/shared leadership at a school. Teacher leadership will be most effective in schools and districts in which there is shared leadership and a focus on building strong relationships among staff, mutual trust, and open communication between teacher leaders, teachers, and school administration. A culture that supports teacher leadership is one that views teachers as leaders among their peers, one where collaboration and teamwork replace the old norm of educators working in isolation (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011).

The Ohio Standards for Principals (OSP) support a commitment to teacher leadership, specifically through establishing and sustaining collaborative learning and shared leadership (OSP 4). Shared leadership results in a sustained, collaborative culture with shared accountability for student learning. This shared leadership is mutually beneficial, enhancing the capacity of principals and other school administrators while harnessing talents and expertise of teachers in leadership roles (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011).

### Structural Factors

Structural factors within educational systems also play a role in promoting and sustaining teacher leadership. Successful teacher leadership occurs when administrators support school environments that provide teachers and teacher leaders with time to collaborate, and when administrators give teachers opportunities to lead and grow as professionals. Since leadership opportunities occur alongside teachers' primary responsibility of teaching students, it is essential to find time for teacher leaders to carry out their teacher leader role (Danielson, 2006). This may require flexible job expectations in some settings and roles.

*“ Student outcomes are more likely to improve where leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community and where teachers are empowered in areas of importance to them. ”*

—Harris & Muijs, 2002

Structures must provide ample professional development

opportunities and supports for teachers, teacher leaders, and school administrators. Professional development for various educators should provide knowledge and skills that prepare and empower them to embrace teacher leadership and positively influence student success.

Schools and districts also must consider other structural factors. If able, they should provide compensation (financial or other) for a variety of teacher leader roles. Whether a role is formal or informal, it is also necessary to define minimum standards for teacher leaders at the local level. These standards help determine how to identify teacher leaders and establish the role(s) they will play. Lastly, it is important to establish a clear and transparent system of accountability and evaluation to ensure that teacher leadership roles are effective.

These are necessary conditions that must be in place to ensure success. All parties in an educational system must be committed to the work of teacher leadership and to its shared vision and purpose. This framework can support schools and districts as they establish their own shared vision for teacher leadership.



## Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework



The Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework includes five broad components of teacher leadership. The five components address the essential aspects of teacher leadership that are research-based, stakeholder-driven, and grounded in state and national standards for teachers. Teacher leaders often engage in the aspects of these components simultaneously. Since teacher leadership roles vary from context to context, no component is more important than another.

Schools and districts can use these five teacher leadership components as they develop and expand a culture that supports teacher leadership in their local contexts. These components also can drive the preparation and ongoing development of teacher leaders and principals.

## Components of Teacher Leadership



### Fostering Collaborative Culture

Teacher leaders facilitate an environment of trust and foster an inclusive and positive collaborative culture. Teacher leaders ground their work in mutual trust and clear communication with colleagues, administrators, students, and families. Teacher leaders use effective interactions that engage colleagues of different backgrounds in responding to challenges and building consensus. The collaborative culture increases teacher collaboration and builds collective responsibility and efficacy.

*“ Collaboration is at the heart of teacher leadership and to be effective it has to encompass mutual trust and support.*

—Harris & Muijs, 2002



### Advancing Instruction and Student Learning

Teacher leaders seek out current research, share it with colleagues, and apply the research to improve teaching practices, content knowledge, and student learning, as well as to advance school programs and goals. They analyze school, district, state, and/or national data as relevant to their work. They lead the use of data to inform and guide instructional decisions.

Teacher leaders understand the needs of adult learners and use this understanding to engage their colleagues in individual and collective reflective dialogue using evidence (such as observations, student work, and assessment data) to help make connections to research-based effective practices. Teacher leaders engage in the development, implementation, and evaluation of professional development activities that are job-embedded and ongoing for teachers at the local, state, and/or national levels.

*“ When teacher leadership occurs in schools, positive effects extend to the teacher leaders, to their colleagues, and, most especially, to the students.*

—Angelle & DeHart, 2016



### Driving Initiatives

Teacher leaders actively identify challenges/areas for improvement and innovation in the school, district, and state/national educational landscape. They collect and consider perspectives of other stakeholders and propose action steps to drive change. They meet their commitments and mobilize people into action. Teacher leaders are advocates for student needs, as well as for professional and ethical practices and resources that support effective teaching and enhanced student learning.

*“ Teachers taking on leadership roles resulted in feelings of empowerment for all teachers in a school, colleagues receiving support that is relevant and encourages professional growth, and teacher leadership contributing significantly to school change.*

—Wenner & Campbell, 2017



### Practicing Professionalism and Ethics

Teacher leaders practice professional, core ethical values of integrity, honesty, fairness and dignity. They foster a positive and welcoming culture that seeks to understand student needs

and respect the uniqueness of individual students. They champion meeting individual needs through professional practice, and believe that all students and educators are capable of learning and growth. Teacher leaders work to ensure that all students receive a high quality education.

Teacher leaders accept the responsibility to continuously grow and develop. Teacher leaders regularly engage in reflection on and refinement of their professional practices by seeking feedback from colleagues, setting self-improvement goals, and committing to ongoing professional learning to enhance their effectiveness. They collaboratively develop and adapt their roles and responsibilities in response to the local educational context.



### Building Relationships and Partnerships

Teacher leaders create and build strategic relationships and partnerships to enhance student outcomes. They reach out and connect the appropriate partners (such as colleagues, families, administrators, community members,

public officials, and higher education) to address immediate and future needs of students, colleagues, school, their profession, and their communities. They communicate and collaborate effectively to build relationships and partnerships that are sustainable.



*“Teacher leaders are approachable and influence primarily through their relationships, which become the foundation upon which teacher leaders are able to share and learn with others.”*

—Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009



## Using the Framework to Move Teacher Leadership Forward in Ohio

It is essential to advance teacher leadership in Ohio. Maximizing the most effective and qualified teachers in our schools provides the ability to encourage teacher recruitment and retention (Wenner & Campbell, 2017) while driving change in schools. As Ohio works to recruit and retain our strongest teachers, teacher leadership will be an important lever.

The Department encourages local education agencies to use this framework to reflect on teacher leadership implementation in their schools. Regardless of the stage local efforts are in today, the five components provided here can help districts beginning to explore teacher leadership, as well as those that wish to refine practices now in place. The [Department's toolkit](#) offers resources and case studies to further assist districts and schools with teacher leadership implementation.

### Questions?

If you have questions about teacher leadership, contact the Department at [teacher.leadership@education.ohio.gov](mailto:teacher.leadership@education.ohio.gov).





## Glossary

**Collaboration:** Collaboration is defined by Winer and Ray (1994, p. 33) as a “mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations (re: persons or entities) to achieve results they are more likely to achieve together than alone.”

**Community:** The educational community is defined as parents, students, engaged community members, support staff, teachers, administrators and school board members.

**Content area:** Content area refers to a broad designation of content knowledge (such as science or language arts) that encompass different disciplines (such as biological science or english composition).

**Efficacy:** In general, the capacity or power to produce a desired effect. Efficacy for teachers is the ability to function as an instructional leader in the classroom, as well as exhibit knowledge of and contributions to, school instructional policy. In effect, it is “the extent to which teachers believe they can affect student learning” (Dembo & Gibson, 1985:173).

**Family:** For the purpose of this framework, the term “family” refers to a student’s parent(s), guardian(s), sibling(s), advocate(s), caregiver(s), and/or extended support system.

**Stakeholders:** Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the defined educational objectives.

**Standards:** A standard is an adaptable goal set at a challenging but achievable level that describes what should be known and what skills and abilities should be present. The language used assists users in developing a framework for reaching that goal.



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