

School Culture: Teacher Leadership Readiness Survey

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District administrators, principals and teachers can use the following teacher leadership readiness survey to assess the extent to which their schools reflect the culture and conditions that are conducive to teacher leadership (see Table 1). The teacher leadership readiness survey includes items that are supportive of teacher practices in general and that research has demonstrated as facilitating teacher leadership, namely a unified vision of school mission, developmental focus, autonomy, collegiality, collaboration, participation in decision making, administrative support, attitudes toward recognition, and general work environment. The survey can be administered at the district or school level and takes approximately 5 minutes to complete.

District administrators and principals may use the results of the survey to take an audit of conditions that support teacher leadership and identify areas that may need further attention to promote teacher leadership. District administrators and principals can calculate the means of the survey items using the 6-point scale at the district or school level. The results of the surveys can be analyzed using the scoring rubric below (see Table 2) to identify elements of the schools' culture that may be inhibiting or promoting teacher leadership. Based on the results of the survey, you might decide that your school needs some help. Accordingly, resources on building a school culture that supports teacher leadership are provided at the end for guidance.



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Table 1. Teacher Leadership Readiness Survey

Survey Items	Response Scale					
	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly agree (6)
1. Teachers and administrators share a common vision of the mission/purpose of this school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. At this school, I am expected to improve my practice by gaining new knowledge and skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. At this school, I am encouraged to take initiative to make improvements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. At this school, my ideas and opinions are valued and respected.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. At this school, I collaborate with other teachers on instructional and student-related matters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. At this school, I participate in decisions that affect me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. At this school, the principal, faculty, and staff work as a team.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. At this school, I am recognized for my professional accomplishments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I am generally satisfied with the work environment among teachers at this school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: Finster, 2016.



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Table 2. Teacher Leadership Readiness Survey Scoring Rubric

Survey element and description	Levels		
	Inhibiting <i>(Average score of teachers is below 3.00)</i>	Developing <i>(Average score of teachers is 3.00 to 4.99)</i>	Promoting <i>(Average score of teachers is 5.00 or above)</i>
1. Mission/purpose: <i>Teachers' actions are guided by a shared mission and purpose.</i>	School does not have a shared mission/purpose statement as indicated by most teachers.	School has somewhat of a shared mission/purpose and vision as indicated by teachers.	School has a strong sense of a shared mission/purpose and vision as indicated by most teachers.
2. Developmental focus: <i>Teachers are focused on gaining new knowledge and skills and are encouraged to help others learn.</i>	School does not have a developmental focus in which most teachers are expected to improve practice by gaining new knowledge and skills.	School has somewhat of a developmental focus in which teachers are expected to improve practice by gaining new knowledge and skills.	School has a strong developmental focus in which most teachers are expected to improve practice by gaining new knowledge and skills.
3. Autonomy: <i>Teachers are encouraged to take initiative and be proactive in making improvements and innovations.</i>	School does not have an autonomous climate in which most teachers take initiative to make improvements.	School has somewhat of an autonomous climate in which teachers take initiative to make improvements.	School has a strong autonomous climate in which most teachers take initiative to make improvements.
4. Collegiality <i>Teachers' ideas and opinions are valued and respected by their colleagues.</i>	School does not have a collegial environment in which the ideas and opinions of most teachers are valued and respected.	School has somewhat of a collegial environment in which the ideas and opinions of teachers are valued and respected.	School has a strong collegial environment in which the ideas and opinions of most teachers are valued and respected.
5. Collaboration <i>Teachers collaborate on instructional and student-related matters by discussing strategies, sharing materials, or observing one another teaching.</i>	School does not have a collaborative environment in which most teachers consistently collaborate with each other on instructional and student-related matters.	School has somewhat of a collaborative environment in which teachers consistently collaborate with each other on instructional and student-related matters.	School has a strong collaborative environment in which most teachers consistently collaborate with each other on instructional and student-related matters.
6. Participation in decision making: <i>Teachers are actively involved in making decisions and having input on important matters that affect them.</i>	School does not have a shared decision-making process in which most teachers participate in decisions that affect them.	School has somewhat of a shared decision-making process in which teachers participate in decisions that affect them.	School has a strong shared decision-making process in which most teachers participate in decisions that affect them.



Table 2. Teacher Leadership Readiness Survey Scoring Rubric—continued

Survey element and description	Levels		
	Inhibiting <i>(Average score of teachers is below 3.00)</i>	Developing <i>(Average score of teachers is 3.00 to 4.99)</i>	Promoting <i>(Average score of teachers is 5.00 or above)</i>
7. Administrative support <i>Teachers are supported by administrators that work with them as a team.</i>	School does not have a supportive administration that functions as a team with most teachers.	School has somewhat of a supportive administration that functions as a team with teachers.	School has a strong supportive administration that functions as a team with most teachers.
8. Attitudes toward recognition: <i>Teachers are recognized for their contributions or roles they take on, as indicated by mutual respect and processes.</i>	School does not have a professional attitude toward recognition in which most teachers are recognized for their professional contributions.	School has somewhat of a professional attitude toward recognition in which teachers are recognized for their professional contributions.	School has a strong professional attitude toward recognition in which most teachers are recognized for their professional contributions.
9. Work environment: <i>There is overall satisfaction with the work environment.</i>	School does not have a positive work environment in which most staff are generally satisfied.	School has somewhat of a positive work environment in which staff are generally satisfied.	School has a strong positive work environment in which most staff are generally satisfied.
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements at the “Inhibiting” level are likely limiting teacher leadership in the school; consider implementing new strategies and practices that are meant to improve the specific element. • Elements at the “Developing” level may be slightly limiting or supporting teacher leadership in the school. Thus, assess the current strategies and practices and consider implementing new ones that could further develop the specific element. • Elements at the “Promoting” level are likely actively supporting and promoting teacher leadership in the school; continue with the current strategies and practices. 			



Resources on Building School Culture to Support Teacher Leadership

The following resources discuss how school leadership may influence school culture to support teacher leadership:

- [The School Turnaround Field Guide](#) provides guidance to school leaders on making fundamental changes in their approaches to building school culture. If a school scored at the “Inhibiting” level on many elements, this resource may be useful for providing guidance and lessons on transforming a school culture.
- In [Review of Research: How Leadership Influences Student Learning](#), the authors discuss how aspects of leadership practices—including setting directions, redesigning the organization (e.g., building collaborative processes), empowering others to make significant decisions, and distributing leadership roles—influence school culture. School leaders may consider working on these leadership practices to make improvements in the various elements of the survey.
- In [Building a School Culture that Promotes Teacher Leadership](#), the authors highlight several characteristics of a culture that supports teacher leadership—including collegial environment, problem-solving orientation, trust, and clear communication—and provide examples of what it looks like. They also provide recommendations for how school leaders can pave the way and set the tone for a school’s culture by, among other qualities, having a growth mindset and being a community builder.
- In [A Systemic Approach to Elevating Teacher Leadership](#), under the *Creation of conditions for successful teacher leadership* section, the authors discuss the rationale and actions for creating supporting conditions for teacher leadership to increase chances for success. The authors discuss the following culture factors: relational trust, collective responsibility, commitment to continuous development, recognition and celebrations, and autonomy.