Teacher Leadership in Ohio: An Executive Report

Practicing Equity and Ethics

Building Relationships and Partnerships

Fostering Collaborative Culture

Advancing Instruction and Student Learning

Driving Initiatives

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) seeks to expand teacher leadership throughout the state. This executive report is one of several resources designed to support local school districts, administrators and teachers in implementing teacher leadership in a manner fitting for their local context. It is based on the realities in five Ohio school districts: Aurora City Schools, Batavia Local Schools, Berea City School District, Mechanicsburg Exempted Village School District and Wayne Local School District. While each district is different in their efforts to promote teacher leadership, there were common themes, policies and practices as noted in this report.

Organizational Culture and Structure

The Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework (ODE, 2017) acknowledges that the necessary conditions for teacher leadership come in the form of culture and structure. Culture refers to the beliefs and behaviors within an organization. For teacher leadership, the belief in and behaviors reflecting shared leadership, particularly among administrators and staff members, are critical in the culture. A solid structure encompasses the processes, practices, roles and tools for teacher leadership. The Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework points out that time to collaborate, opportunities to lead and professional development are pillars in a structure that supports teacher leadership. The key lessons learned about culture and structure for teacher leadership to flourish include:

- **Leadership is not based on a position or title but rather rooted in attitude and approach:** Teacher leadership is grounded in attitudes that focus on student success, foster collaboration, elevate stakeholder voices and are accepting of additional responsibilities beyond their individual classrooms. A positional leadership title is only one means for executing leadership. Someone with a formal title cannot lead their colleagues or organization if they do not have the proper attitude or approach.

- **Teacher leadership is a complement to administrative leadership:** Teacher leadership fulfills a need in driving initiatives, building relationships and advancing instruction and learning that cannot be fulfilled by administrators who are a step removed from the classroom. Conversely, teacher leadership is not a substitute for solid administrative leadership. The administration has to set a clear vision, establish a productive tone for the district and school, and facilitate access to the processes and tools that teachers need to lead. Both administrative and teacher leadership must be present to optimize student success.

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- **A diverse group of teacher leaders should be included in the organization's leadership.** Teacher leadership opportunities within the organization should be open to all based on fit and expertise. Teachers with varying leadership styles and personalities should be welcome to lead in their own way. Diverse representation regarding grade, subject area or specialty, years in the district, gender, race/ethnicity and other characteristics should be considered in assembling leadership teams and encouraging leadership growth. With diversity, a district or school can maximize its leadership talent.

- **Administrators must appropriately design formal teacher leadership roles:** If a district has formal teacher leader roles, the positions should have clear job descriptions aligned to enhancing student learning. In addition, the role should include the authority to make decisions and carry out the work. Confusion regarding the purpose, responsibilities and authority of positions can cause chaos and uncertainty. A lack of strong job descriptions can also make a teacher leadership position more secretarial or administrative in nature instead of focused on improving student success. Position availability and the selection process need to be transparent. Leaders should be selected based on their technical expertise related to the role as well as their ability to embody, through their practice, the components of the Ohio Teacher Leadership Framework: Fostering Collaborative Culture, Advancing Instruction and Student Learning, Driving Initiatives, Practicing Equity and Ethics, and Building Relationships and Partnerships. If teacher leadership is a simple product of seniority or favoritism, it will demoralize the staff and fall short in serving students.

- **Districts and schools must structure time for teachers to work and learn together:** Common planning time, contracted team meeting time outside of the instructional day, release time for collaborative projects and an allocation of supplemental hours are just some of the ways districts carve out time for teachers to be leaders. This time can be used for professional learning communities (PLCs); initiative planning and execution; collaborative reflection of practice; reviewing student performance; designing action plans; and grade, cohort, building or district decision-making. Time is a fundamental resource to leaders.

- **Teachers need a range of modes to showcase their expertise and demonstrate leadership:** A menu of leadership options with varying degrees of responsibilities and expertise levels should be available to teachers. The variety of opportunities will capitalize on teacher talent while balancing responsibilities and distributing leadership to the greatest extent. Examples include:

  – Professional development sessions designed and led by internal teachers;

  – Seats on district and school leadership teams and committees;

  – Roles within a professional learning community;

  – Formal department, instructional leadership or coaching positions;

— Project coordination roles; and

— Mentoring opportunities.

- **Teacher leaders desire professional development to be stronger organizational leaders:** While teachers often participate in professional development and continuous education related to instruction, teacher leaders also need professional development opportunities to lead and coach their peers. Ranging from teacher leadership endorsement programs to formal training on academic coaching to book studies, teacher leaders should continue to sharpen their tools to lead among the professionals in their school and district.

All districts underscored the importance of administrators setting the organizational culture and structure. Specific steps administrators may take to create the culture and structure to support teacher leadership are included in the table below.

Concrete Actions Administrators Can Take to Advance Teacher Leadership	For District Administrator 〇 / For Principal or Building Administrator 🏫
Organizational	
Mindfully distribute leadership by allowing more decision-making to happen at the teacher level. Create a multi-leveled process to review strategic decisions from teacher teams to building teams to district teams. The Ohio Improvement Process Team Structure is a potential resource.	〇 🏫
Distribute up: Be willing to assume tasks (e.g., state/federal program reporting) so that principals have more time to work and coach teachers as leaders.	〇
Have an open-door policy so that teachers can come to you with ideas and challenges. Listen, provide support and communicate constraints while looking for a winning solution and opportunity. Allow teachers to lead the implementation of their ideas and find ways to address challenges; however, do not shirk administrative responsibility.	🏫 **In addition, district administrators may be appropriate points of contact in smaller districts.**
Establish a time in the day, either through common planning time or extra time outside of the teaching day, for teacher teams, PLCs or building teams to meet.	〇 🏫
Create or revisit your formal teacher leader job descriptions (e.g., grade-level chairs, department chairs, instructional coaches, etc.) to see if their roles are clearly defined and if the descriptions align with the Teacher Leadership Framework. See a job description template for assistance.	〇 🏫
Offer or encourage professional development, such as teacher leader endorsement programs, that broadens teacher leaders' ability to apply adult learning strategies and enhances their soft skills for peer-to-peer coaching and collaboration.	〇 🏫

Concrete Actions Administrators Can Take to Advance Teacher Leadership	**For District Administrator** **For Principal or Building Administrator**
Spread professional development opportunities among staff so that more teachers are encouraged to return from training and share knowledge within their teams in internal PLCs, lunch and learns, district professional development days and one-on-one conversations.	🏫
Provide, in partnership with teacher leaders, professional development days designed and led by internal teachers. Point out a teacher's strength and potential to lead professional development for peers in specific areas of expertise. This checklist for high quality professional development may be adapted to assist.	🗺️ 🏫
Encourage teachers to be engaged with data in existing teacher teams, professional learning communities and building teams to advance instruction. Some resources are found in the Coaching Teacher-Based Teams document.	🏫
Start and participate in book studies or other common reading materials to build a shared vision with teacher leaders. This can be started with the administrative team or can be executed at all levels. Please find a list of books that interviewees referenced during the case studies.	🗺️ 🏫
Provide tools to focus teacher teams and support teacher leaders on the needs of students and organizational goals. To assist teacher teams or PLCs, please see the example PLC Framework from Aurora.	🏫

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Concrete Actions Administrators Can Take to Advance Teacher Leadership	For District Administrator For Principal or Building Administrator
Interpersonal	
Correct and coach staff members with negative attitudes. If an individual in an administrative or building leadership position does not demonstrate a positive encouraging attitude, address it in a one-on-one crucial conversation. This resource for crucial conversations may be useful.	
Be present. Sit in on teacher teams, committees and department meetings from time to time to listen and take the pulse of the organization.	
Listen to key stakeholders and respond in a timely manner. Provide resources, answers and authority for teacher leaders to execute work. Follow through on feedback given by and decisions made by teacher leaders.	
Identify key stakeholders and potential leaders throughout your organization. Partner with teacher leaders to determine influencers and hidden talent in the district or building.	
Encourage risk taking within reasonable parameters. When projects or results are lackluster, discuss shortcomings with teacher leaders in a constructive manner, one that is oriented toward finding a solution and developing leadership skills.	
Strengthen your own leadership skills. Continue to develop your ability to lead and serve as a model of leadership through leadership training, reading books on leadership and culture and staying current with education leadership trends.	

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Components of Teacher Leadership

While administrators provide a foundation and frame for teacher leadership, the essence of teacher leadership is lived out by the teacher leaders themselves. Effective teacher leadership includes the five components of Teacher Leadership identified in the Ohio Teacher Leader Framework – Fostering Collaborative Culture; Advancing Instruction and Student Learning; Driving Initiatives; Practicing Equity and Ethics; and Building Relationships and Partnerships. These components were commonly demonstrated across the districts by:

- **Putting student success first:** Teacher leaders are clearly focused on doing what is best for students. They are equity-minded in their approach to students – seeking to eliminate disparities in outcomes for students of different backgrounds, races, socio-economic status, or socio-emotional experiences. Teacher leaders keep their peers and administrators focused on student success.

- **Showing people that they care about them as an individual:** Teacher leaders show people that they care. First and foremost, they show students that they care in their word and deed. They also build healthy relationships with peers, parents, community members and administrators.

- **Facilitating an organized process:** Teacher leaders need solid meeting facilitation and project management skills to advance work beyond their classroom. They need to take ideas and feedback from peers and move it to collective action.

- **Sharing resources with fellow teachers:** Teacher leaders readily pass along helpful articles, lessons, technology and other assets. They also model effective practices and share teaching materials with colleagues.

In their words...

"Every teacher leader needs to look at the whole child."
Berea teacher leader

"Whether it is a teacher or student, any connection you have to show that you care about them as a person makes them open to learning."
Mechanicsburg teacher leader

"If you want to have your opinion valued, appreciate what everyone contributes. No one should ever be shut down."
Mechanicsburg teacher leader

"You have to have credibility as a teacher first; you can take leadership classes until doomsday, but you have to be credible."
Aurora teacher leader

"One of the best things is pointing people in the direction and not just telling them or handing them the solution."
Wayne teacher leader

"I definitely listen to my colleagues. I then take it to administration."
Batavia teacher leader

- **Utilizing data:** Teacher leaders understand and embrace the purpose of data to advance learning.

- **Elevating the voice and expertise of others:** Teacher leaders listen to their peers and their students and elevate the voices of all stakeholders to affect decision-making. They also recognize and promote the expertise of colleagues. They aid fellow teachers in building their own capacity to be better teachers.

- **Continuing their own professional development**: Teacher leaders are reflective of their personal practices and consistently look for opportunities to get better as a professional.

The tactics and activities shared by teacher leaders in the districts were either techniques to strengthen their individual skills to be teacher leaders or supported collective efficacy of teacher leadership. See the table below.

Concrete Actions Teachers Can Take to Advance Teacher Leadership	**Personal skills** 👤 **Collective efficacy** 👥
Fostering Collaborative Culture	
Focus meeting agendas, utilize technology for team online forums and document repositories, and share agenda, complete with topics, goals and decision points in advance. Consider co-creating agendas or rotate creating them with other teachers.	👤 👥
Empower all voices. Listen to and encourage peers to share within the teams. Improve skills to facilitate conversations. This resource on tips for facilitating conversations may be useful.	👤 👥
Encourage peers to lead or co-lead projects, professional learning community sessions and/or professional development sessions, internally or externally in the education field.	👥
Find ways to connect teachers socially (e.g., potlucks on in-service days, quarterly social activities), thus increasing the chance that it will lead to collaboration. However, do not expect that social connections are the foundation or purpose of team meetings. This resource on making the best of teacher teams may be useful.	👥
Develop and communicate a clear shared vision for teams and projects with team members	👥
Participate in training, such as teacher leader endorsement programs or leadership development, in adult learning, leadership techniques and coaching strategies.	👤

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Concrete Actions Teachers Can Take to Advance Teacher Leadership	Personal skills Collective efficacy
Advancing Instruction and Student Learning	
Build additional expertise in your subject area, in various instructional techniques and in other facets of teaching about which you are passionate.	(Personal)
Design and deliver professional development in your school, district, state or nation, based on areas of expertise. This checklist for creating professional development may be of assistance.	(Personal + Collective)
Read journals, publications, newspapers and blogs within the profession and education at large.	(Personal)
Forward resources, articles and professional development opportunities that may interest peers.	(Collective)
Reference strategic frameworks and shared vision to reinforce accountability to the needs of students and organizational goals, and work collectively to achieve them.	(Collective)
Leverage graduate school, teacher leadership programs and continuous education training to develop and lead initiatives and projects to improve instruction and learning.	(Personal + Collective)
Model instructional practices. Open your class for observation, bring instructional tools to professional learning communities for discussion and critique, and/or co-teach lessons with a developing educator. These sample classroom activities may be of assistance.	(Personal + Collective)
Become knowledgeable about student data and various assessment data and facilitating data-driven conversations and reflections in team meetings. Some resources are found here: https://education.ohio.gov/Media/Extra-Credit-Blog/November-2016/Connecting-Dots-Curriculum-Standards-Assessments-a https://education.ohio.gov/Media/Extra-Credit-Blog/November-2017/Curiosity-and-Good-Data-Use.	(Personal + Collective)

Concrete Actions Teachers Can Take to Advance Teacher Leadership	Personal skills Collective efficacy
Driving Initiatives	
Communicate about decisions to peer teachers, particularly teachers who are not in formal teacher leadership roles. The communication helps colleagues understand the reason for decisions.	
Articulate pros and cons about initiatives to administration and leadership teams as identified by colleagues. Providing honest critiques to administrators.	
Start or participate in a book study to create bonds around shared vision and understanding of culture, leadership or education topics. This list of books mentioned in the case studies may be useful.	
Create specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely (SMART) goals and appropriate metrics to track implementation and outcomes of initiatives. This resource on goal setting may be of assistance.	
Practicing Equity and Ethics	
To continue your growth, reflect on personal practice to find ways to improve and build on your strengths.	
Be equity-minded and work to develop and grow in culturally responsive practices to support the learning of all students.	
Continue to learn about your students and the trends, experiences and needs of the ever-changing faces of the student body. This blog shares how one teacher stretched her learning.	
Address peers, typically in private conversation, to point out when they are not acting ethically or equitably and encourage them to take a different course.	
Acknowledge that everyone has something to contribute, regardless of tenure, experience, credential, background, etc.	

Concrete Actions Teachers Can Take to Advance Teacher Leadership	Personal skills 👤 / Collective efficacy 👥👥
Building Relationships and Partnerships	
Motivate and support peer teachers by expressing gratitude in private and public means.	👥
Approach colleagues one-on-one and in person to discuss differences or provide criticism. Provide critical feedback in a manner so that peers can receive the message—typically with an acknowledgment of care for the peer, strengths of the peer, intention of the feedback or the impact on students and teachers. This resource on conducting crucial conversations may be of assistance.	👤 👥
Visit rooms of, eat lunch with, and sit by various teachers to learn about their personal interests and experiences as well as their professional interest, strengths and needs.	👥
Reach out to new teachers: Ask about their needs and challenges, explain more about the building and district culture, and support their onboarding process.	👥
Foster relationships with parents and families by making contact early and routinely with positive (not just negative) information about their students.	👤 👥
Develop processes to better integrate student and parents who enter the school in mid-year, including mid-term welcoming events, teacher team meetings including non-core instructors to review student records/needs, etc.	👤 👥
Encourage team-wide deployment of ways to communicate with parents about what is happening in the classroom and school, including the use of technology to remind them of events, send a word of encouragement and access information.	👤 👥
Connect with local businesses and organizations for projects tied to student learning including but not limited to career exploration.	👤 👥

To illustrate these principles in action, we have provided the following vignettes, drawn from larger individual case studies, on teacher leadership in each selected district. These vignettes explain each district's overall approach to teacher leadership and include a link to the district's case studies.

Aurora City Schools

"Dispositional leadership," the belief that leadership is an attitude and behavior more than a position or contractual duty, is the anchoring tenet of teacher leadership in Aurora City Schools. The Aurora City School District has more than 180 educators serving approximately 3,000 students in a suburban community of Northeast Ohio.

Aurora has put both formal teacher leadership positions and outlets for informal teacher leadership in place.

Source: National Park Service.

Aurora has formal teacher leadership positions including grade-level chairpersons, department chairpersons, academic coaches and an instructional technology coach. The chairpersons receive supplemental contracts to coordinate teachers, curricula, instruction and budgets within their grade or academic subject. One of the teacher leaders stated, "In the beginning the department chair role was very secretarial, but now we are more of a springboard. It is more than the notetaker..." Academic coaches are full-time positions and spend time regularly in other teachers' classrooms. They model instruction, co-teach and observe teachers for real-time professional development.

Informal teacher leadership in Aurora happens in a variety of forms, but the most structured forms of informal leadership occur within district professional development days and professional learning communities (PLCs).

Aurora's teachers present at the district's professional development days. Any teacher can submit a session to be selected in the professional development day, and dozens of sessions were offered at the last professional development event. The teachers see the value of having their peers present and being able to follow up with them after the session for questions or to visit their classes to see the practice in action. In addition, teachers as participants will pick from a "menu, not an agenda" of these sessions. If teachers do not find a session related to their professional development goals, they may choose to do an independent study activity.

Professional learning communities are the nexus for teachers to share their practice, foster collaboration and advance student learning. Every Aurora school has common planning time among teachers to support participation in PLCs. The district has provided guidance on effective PLCs and implemented a district-wide book study called *On Common Ground: The Power of*

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Professional Learning Communities (Dufour, Eaker and DuFour, 2005). It also conducts a study of the book for every cohort of new teachers.

For the full Aurora City Schools case study, see Aurora's Disposition.

Batavia Local Schools

Batavia is a rural small town located east of Cincinnati, Ohio that is experiencing increased suburban development. The district engages teachers in a wide variety of leadership opportunities to determine and implement what works for students. Batavia Local's 158 educators teach 2,215 students.

One administrator stated that the Batavia process is structured to "enhance the level of teacher voice and incorporate a wide variety of talent." The work of the elementary and high school, which share a campus in Batavia, was studied. The elementary school has professional learning communities and the high school has department teams and High Schools That Work committees as structured opportunities for teacher leadership. In addition to the building-level committee work, Batavia has established district-wide committees for technology and college and career readiness that involve teacher leaders.

Time is contracted into the day, either through common planning time or extra time outside of the teaching day, for elementary committees and high school departments to meet. The committees and department meetings have components of PLCs, and not just operational tasks. The elementary school interviewees were enthusiastic about the work of the PLCs, but some expressed concerns about time constraints as the building transitioned to PLC meeting time once instead of twice per week; time to meet as grade-level teams has also been constricted.

Both schools have building leadership teams (BLTs) that aid in setting direction and making decisions about the school, such as discipline policies or school-wide strategies to improve performance. The BLTs also inform the district about resource needs. BLTs have a mix of representation for grades at the elementary level and a mix of departments at the high school level. The teams also have a mix of professionals and expertise, such as Title I and special education.

The high school principal holds individual meetings with department chairs bi-weekly and a collective department chair meeting every 3 weeks. This routine seeks to recast the role of department chairs and distribute leadership down to the chairs and the departments. The principal and chairs noted that this process re-establishes expectations for chairs and teachers

in collectively shaping their department and instruction. Previously, teachers might work independently to request resources or voice concerns to administrators. With this new approach, teacher leaders are charged with collectively engaging with the department to decide resources and gather concerns for the teacher leader to take to the principal.

In both buildings, administrators (including the superintendent) sit in on teacher teams, committees and department meetings from time to time to listen and take the pulse of the organization.

For the full Batavia Local Schools case study, see Batavia Engages Teachers in What Works.

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Berea City School District

Berea has championed and embraced teacher leadership as a lever to adjust to an ever-changing educational landscape that has included school mergers and demographic changes in the community. Located to serve Berea, Brook Park, and Middleburg Heights (suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio), the Berea City School District has 469 educators serving almost 6,000 students. Berea has established an instructional leadership approach that aligns the various levels of leadership to advance teaching and learning. Figure 1 illustrates Berea's instructional leadership organization.
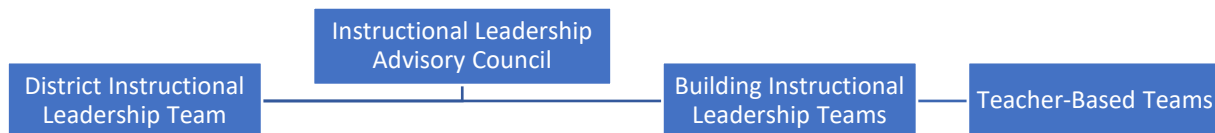
Figure 1: Berea City School District Instructional Leadership Organization

Closest to the students, teacher-based teams (TBTs), which are organized by grade level, subject area or course, serve as PLCs. The school day is structured for these teams to have a common planning time. Formal teacher leaders, who receive supplemental pay, lead grade-level or subject-level teams. In the middle school, formal teacher leaders support a group of teachers across subjects who share a cohort of students within the school. The teacher-based teams, regardless of unit, are a conduit to informal teacher leadership opportunities. Teachers speak of sharing practices, modeling work, reviewing data and disseminating research in their TBTs. TBTs have flexibility in their operations.

On a school-wide level, there are building instructional leadership teams (BILTs) that include administrators and teacher leaders focused on teaching and learning in the building. The BILT focuses on consistency within the building and gaining support and resources for the TBTs. The BILT can also advocate and communicate with the district instructional leadership team.

The district instructional leadership team (DILT) sets instructional goals, procedures and direction aligned to the district's strategic plan. The DILT is co-facilitated by the Berea Federation of Teachers and the Academic Affairs department. Teacher leaders participate in DILT meetings as a part of their overarching responsibilities as formal leaders at the building or teacher-based team level. No additional compensation is given for DILT participation.

While many teacher leadership positions are tied to the instructional leadership framework, additional formal and informal teacher leadership roles exist. Berea has an administrative intern program; these are contractual positions for teachers to shadow building or district

administration as it relates to teaching and learning. Instructional coaches for technology and core academic areas are available to support learning in the classroom.

As a complement to the nested teams, the Instructional Leadership Advisory Council (ILAC) is a representative group tasked with making recommendations to the superintendent on curricular and instructional items such as the curriculum revision cycle, district-wide instructional programs and criteria for selecting instructional materials. The ILAC consists of principals and teachers from each building, DILT members, and a board member serving in an advisory capacity.

Project-based teacher leaders are also present in the district. Program coordinators, such as the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)[1] coordinators, may receive a reduced course load or supplemental pay to design and coordinate programs. Berea has several teachers taking on informal roles to plan and execute initiatives. One such example is the working group for LINK Crew, which organizes high school students to serve as ambassadors to the incoming class of 9th-graders. Involved teachers are given release time, national professional development opportunities and some paid curriculum writing hours to execute the LINK Crew.

For the full Berea City Schools case study, see Shared Leadership in Berea.

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[1] Advancement Via Individual Determination is a college readiness program to help at-risk students develop the skills they need to go to and be successful in college.

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Mechanicsburg City Schools

Mechanicsburg Exempted Village School District is a small, rural district located in Champaign County, in west central Ohio. The district has established a deliberate approach to cultivate "leadership at all levels." It serves 829 students with 61 educators.

Mechanicsburg's systems and structures include formal teacher leadership roles and informal teacher leadership opportunities. Part of its formal teacher leadership structure started with the Ohio Improvement Process when the district was in school improvement status in 2008. While Mechanicsburg has advanced out of school improvement status, it has maintained the committee structures for TBTs, BILTs, and DLTs.

As one administrator noted, teacher-based team meeting time is built into the school day with common planning time, even with constraints of reduction in force. Facilitation of the TBTs varies by group with some groups rotating meeting responsibilities among members, some without a defined meeting management approach, and

Figure 1: Ohio Improvement Process

others that are led by a volunteer member. Teachers who serve on the BLT or DLT, and who may or may not lead the teacher-based teams, are in formal leadership positions and receive supplemental pay for their service.

Mentors for resident educators and teachers who transfer into the district also assume formal teacher leadership roles. Teacher leaders may also serve as project coordinators on grant-sponsored projects such as the Socio-Emotional Learning Development program. Formal teacher representation may also be a part of various subcommittees.

Informal teacher leadership opportunities are plentiful. Teachers start initiatives that not only receive the district's support but also the community's support, such as the Purple Star program to support students, families and staff members who are connected to the military. Teachers lead and participate in book clubs. Teachers also volunteer to participate in advisory committees and prototyping for the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System. A large part of the informal leadership comes in the form of planning or offering professional development to peers.

Professional development presentations are a common way for all teachers, from resident educators to veteran instructors, to demonstrate leadership. Mechanicsburg teachers worked

with peers across the county to plan and present at Crowdstruction, a professional development day organized by multiple districts in Champaign County to crowdsource instructional practices.

For the full Mechanicsburg Exempted Village case study, see Mechanicsburg: Leadership at All Levels.

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Wayne Local

Wayne Local schools, nestled in Waynesville in southwest Ohio, have a culture of shared leadership with teachers as an important component. The district has 105 educators and a student body of 1,393.

Wayne Local has developed and reformed its teacher leadership structures in recent years. In the last year, a joint collaboration of the high school and middle school has created subject matter instructional leader positions who serve 6th to 12th grade. This approach aids in academic alignment and builds district cohesion as they anticipate a merger of the middle and high schools after construction of a new school building is complete. The administrative team developed a job description and then opened a call for applications. Administrators then interviewed and selected instructional leaders if multiple teachers applied for an instructional leader position. Previously, only the high school was served by formal teacher leadership positions.

In the elementary school, the approach differs. "We don't have formal teacher leadership [roles] in elementary," stated an administrator. "The teachers referenced the history of people being given responsibility, and it was not clear about role, and that was not done carefully." However, teachers are engaged in distributed leadership through various committees and professional learning communities at the elementary level. Common planning periods accommodate teamwork and meeting time for teachers to work beyond their individual classrooms.

The district has also established teacher leadership roles in the Gifted Coordinator, Testing Coordinator, and Senior Options Coordinator. These staff have a reduced or no teaching load but work integrally to improve classroom instruction and student learning across the district.

In structuring teacher leadership opportunities, particularly formal roles, the importance of supporting teachers in taking on leadership was highlighted. "It's not just putting them in the position and giving them the title," noted a participant in an administrative team meeting. "It has got to be a commitment to coaching them through the process and developing a constant support." Principals saw their role as interacting with teacher leaders to aid in implementing projects and to understand the work in teacher teams.

Informally, the district structure allows for individuals to initiate projects and take on various responsibilities.

For the full Wayne Local case study, see The Waynesville Way.

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About the Teacher Leadership in Ohio Executive Report

The Ohio Department of Education, in collaboration with C H Smith & Associates, conducted case studies on teacher leadership in five Ohio school districts in 2019. A convenience sample of several teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders in multiple building and district roles was drawn for each district. From the sample, an individual or group interview was requested in order to capture information about promising practices in teacher leadership and understand how components of Ohio's Teacher Leadership Framework are in effect throughout the state. This Executive Report summarizes the findings from the case studies.