

## Distributed Leadership – Model Policy

### Model Policy Resources

As with all model policy, the legislative framework below is aspirational and based on a synthesis of existing research and strong state policies. Rarely can you find all of the desired policy elements in a single bill, and thus a model bill typically reflects actual state legislation and policy recommendations from leading partner organizations and experts.

The model policy below is adapted from two sources: [a 2014 bill](#) passed in New Jersey that establishes a teacher leader endorsement for instructional certification and a [series of policy recommendations](#) for states developed by New Leaders that provide greater clarity for the role of the state in supporting districts and ensuring that other state policies align with and enable distributed leadership models. Many states may currently lack the capacity or certain elements to implement this policy fully, and instead may need to modify the language to reflect a phased approach.

### An Act to Support Schoolwide Distributed Leadership Models

#### Section 1. Teacher Leadership Roles.

a) The State Board of Education (Board) shall establish a teacher leader endorsement for instructional certification. In establishing the teacher leader endorsement, the Board shall consult with teachers, principals, and district administrators regarding the requirements for endorsement.

b) In establishing the teacher leader endorsement, the State Board shall set forth model standards for teacher leaders and the requirements for program study, which may include field experiences and additional coursework acquired beyond the standards.

c) The Board may establish multiple tiers for endorsement to reflect different teacher leader roles.

d) At a minimum, the standards shall prepare a teacher leader to:

1) Foster a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning, which shall include understanding the principles of adult learning and how to develop a collaborative culture of collective responsibility;

2) Support collaborative team structures, including professional learning communities, and promote an environment of trust, respect, and collegiality to advance continuous improvement in instruction and student learning;

3) Access and use research to improve practices and student learning, which shall include understanding how to use research, and how to model and facilitate with colleagues' systematic inquiry and research use as a critical component of teachers' ongoing learning and development in improving teaching and learning;

4) Promote professional learning for continuous improvement, which shall include understanding the evolving nature of teaching and learning, understanding established and emerging technologies and the school community, and sharing this knowledge with colleagues to promote, design, and facilitate job-embedded professional learning aligned with school improvement goals;

5) Observe, evaluate, supervise, and provide instructional coaching to other teachers in coordination with the school leader and other trained evaluators;

6) Facilitate improvements in instruction and student learning, which shall include demonstrating and using a thorough understanding of the teaching and learning processes to advance the professional skills of colleagues by being a continuous learner, modeling reflective practice based on student needs, and coaching or working collaboratively with colleagues to ensure that instructional practices are aligned to a shared mission, vision, and goals;

7) Promote the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement, which shall include being knowledgeable about research on current classroom- and school-based design and selection of appropriate formative and summative assessment methods, sharing that knowledge, and collaborating with colleagues in using assessments and other data to make informed decisions regarding student learning and in influencing school improvement practices, district improvement practices, or both;

8) Improve outreach and collaboration with families and communities, which shall include understanding the significant impact that families, cultures, and communities have on educational processes and student learning, and working 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 student learning opportunities to support cultures of student success; and

9) Advocate for student learning and the teaching and education profession.

## **Section 2. Supporting Distributed Leadership**

a) The state department of education (department) shall ensure that state policies support and encourage the use of distributed leadership models. To achieve that goal, the department shall:

1) Develop model job descriptions for use by districts and schools that amplify the results of effective educators and identify clear responsibilities and performance expectations for teacher leader roles;

2) Provide technical assistance to districts and principals to help them to design differentiated teacher leader roles that support school improvement efforts;

3) Develop resources and model trainings, based on existing research, that help principals identify the right members for an instructional leadership team, form the team, and help it function well;

4) Provide models of career pathways and differentiated compensation systems that reward effective teachers who remain in the classroom and take on additional responsibilities;

5) Develop guidance regarding the leadership standards on where principals, with adequate support from their supervisors, should focus their time and attention, including talent management, and specifically leadership development, along with instructional leadership and culture building;

6) Provide districts with sample collective bargaining language that supports development of teacher leader roles, including allowing teachers to observe, evaluate, and supervise peers, to use in negotiations with their local bargaining units; and

7) In awarding Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title II-A subgrants to districts, encourage localities to use funds for leadership development activities for principals and teachers.

- b) The department shall remove state-level regulatory barriers that:
- 1) Prevent principals from hiring the right teachers for their school, promoting the best teachers into leadership positions, and, when needed, removing ineffective teachers;
  - 2) Prevent teachers from taking on additional leadership responsibilities or evaluating and supervising their peers, such as licensure requirements that prevent non-administrators from conducting observations; and
  - 3) Prevent districts with strong plans from developing or supporting innovative, evidenced-based approaches to educator evaluation and support.
- c) In the event that removal of state-level regulatory barriers or change of policy requires legislative action, the department shall recommend such changes to the legislature within 120 days of the effective date of this act.
- d) The department should consider the use of federal funding available for state set-aside to support the activities detailed in this act and to advance teacher leader development.
- e) The department may pilot research-based teacher leadership programs in schools or districts most in need of great teaching and leading. Such pilot programs should include funding for study of implementation.

### **Section 3. Program approval.**

- a) Any institution of higher education, an educational organization, or other nonprofit entity, or a combination thereof, may apply to the department to offer a program of study for the teacher leader endorsement.
- b) The department shall issue rules establishing the requirements for program application and approval.

### **Section 4. Program data collection and evaluation.**

- a) The department shall collect data from approved providers of the teacher leader endorsement program regarding the number of teacher leader endorsements issued to teachers enrolled in the program of study, the effectiveness of the program of study, and such other data deemed appropriate by the department.
- b) The department shall prepare an annual report for the board regarding the data collected and the efficacy of the state's teacher leader programs, along with any recommendations to improve additional state policies that can support distributed leadership models.

### **For more information, please see:**

New Leaders, [\*Untapped: A Policy Roadmap for Improving Schools Through Shared Leadership\*](#)

New Jersey 2014 legislation, [S-165/A-448](#)