

Policy Points

THE TEACHER LEADERSHIP LANDSCAPE

Teachers wanting to advance their careers often have few options aside from leaving the classroom to take on administrative roles. But a growing number of teachers are hungry for leadership opportunities that allow them to stay in the classroom at least on a part-time basis. Simultaneously, the principal's role has become more challenging—75 percent of principals feel the job has become too complex¹—underscoring the need to leverage teachers as leaders. Research indicates that teacher leadership can improve teacher retention, build teacher capacity, facilitate school staffing innovations, and, ultimately, strengthen the teaching profession.²

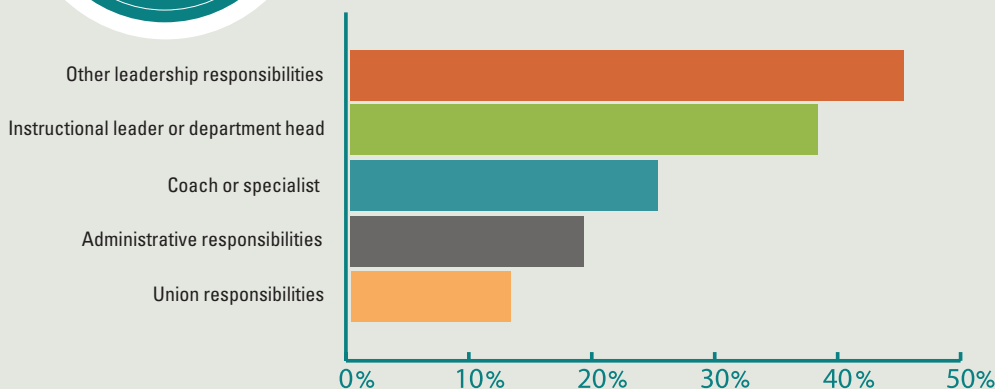
Yet, as some schools, districts, and states are capitalizing on teacher leaders, questions remain about what it means to be a teacher leader, how to best prepare and support teacher leaders, and how policy can help to both enhance teacher leaders' development and optimize their skills for schools.



When asked to describe teacher leaders, participants in the 2014 ASCD Forum—a three-month online and in-person educator-driven conversation about teacher leadership—most frequently used the terms *collaborative* and *approachable*.

WHAT IS TEACHER LEADERSHIP?

ADDITIONAL ROLES HELD BY TEACHER LEADERS



Note: Respondents were able to select multiple answers; percentages will total more than 100 percent.

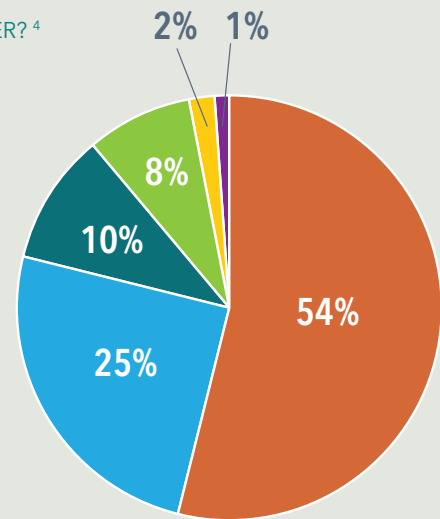
When 1,210 teacher leaders were surveyed about the types of roles they hold outside the classroom, the greatest number indicated "other leadership responsibilities," raising questions about what those responsibilities entail.³



Teachers who have formal leadership roles are more likely than teachers without such roles to have at least six years of teaching experience.¹

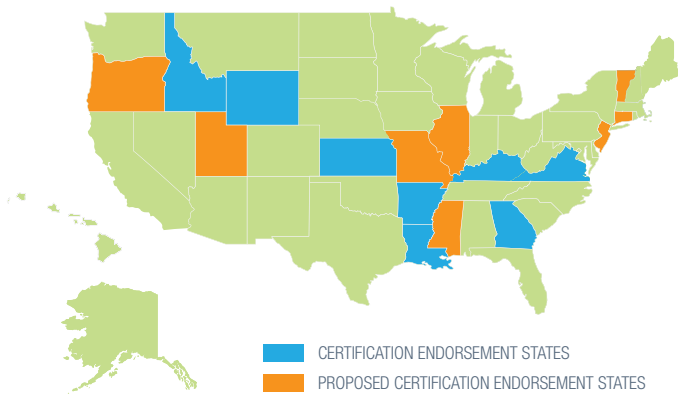
WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE PRIMARY CHARACTERISTIC OF A TEACHER LEADER? ⁴

- Is an influence—in the school, with peers, improving school culture, or with administrators
- Is adept at improving their colleagues' instructional practices
- Has proven success at improving student outcomes
- Facilitates meaningful conversations between teachers and administrators
- Holds a formal leadership role outside of the classroom
- Other



HOW ARE STATES RECOGNIZING TEACHER LEADERSHIP?

TEACHER LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATIONS



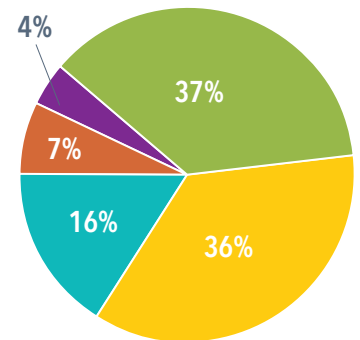
Sixteen states have current or proposed certification endorsements relating to teacher leadership. However, requirements to achieve the designation vary widely. No state requires teachers to have the endorsement to serve in teacher leadership roles.⁶

4

STATES

LOUISIANA
MARYLAND
TENNESSEE
WEST VIRGINIA

These states have introduced teacher leader roles focused on helping districts implement the Common Core standards.⁶

IF A STATE DESIRED TO CULTIVATE TEACHER-LEADERS, WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGY? ⁷

- Provide additional compensation to teachers with leadership roles
- Establish a teacher leader network to support collaboration
- Adopt a formal teacher leader licensure or certification program
- Develop or adopt teacher leader performance standards
- Other

SOURCES

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