Typology of Teacher Leadership Programs

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Typology of Teacher Leadership Programs

Abstract

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Education leaders are perennially seeking new ways to build the capacity of teachers to enhance learning experiences for all students. Teacher leadership, which we define as teachers’ support of the improvement of teaching and learning beyond their own classroom, has long been a source of interest and experimentation (Wenner & Campbell, 2017; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teacher leadership recognizes teachers’ instructional expertise as an asset for educational improvement, capitalizes upon teachers’ relationships with their colleagues to support change, and may provide career advancement opportunities to improve job satisfaction and the professionalization of teaching. For these and other reasons, states, districts, funders and teachers themselves have become increasingly interested in the promise of teacher leadership.

In this study, we map the landscape of teacher leadership programs across the U.S. and identify commonalities and distinctions amongst the range of programs. Using a variety of search approaches to capture publicly-available information, we document 285 state, local, university, and foundation-sponsored programs that use a variety of techniques to support teachers as leaders. We then categorize the forms of support, attending to program models, objectives, sponsorship, and audience.

We identify three major forms of support provided by teacher leadership programs: (1) preparation of teachers with knowledge and skills that can help them to lead; (2) positioning of teachers in leadership roles to capitalize upon their expertise; and (3) recognition of teachers as leaders through awards and other forms of appreciation or acknowledgement. While some programs focus only on one of these approaches, most employed a combination of these forms of support. Based on this, we define seven types of teacher leadership programs and provide an interactive depiction of this typology, with examples, to illustrate the variation within each of the seven types.

While there are undoubtedly programs that escaped our view, as well as homegrown and informal initiatives that we could not document, this systematic search is the broadest scan of the teacher leadership program landscape conducted in the United States to date.

Keywords
Teacher Leadership Programs, Credential Programs, Fellowship Programs, Award Programs, Consultancy Programs, Differentiated Work Programs, Communities of Practice, Professional Advancement

Disciplines
Educational Leadership | Other Education | Teacher Education and Professional Development

Comments
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TYPOLOGY OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

A SCAN OF U.S. PROGRAMS + INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT TEACHERS TO TAKE NEW AND VARIED ROLES

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