



Model Teacher Leader Standards
*Developed by the Teacher Leadership
Exploratory Consortium*

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Domain I: Understanding Adults As Learners to Support Professional Learning Communities

The teacher leader understands how adults acquire and apply knowledge and uses this information to promote a culture of shared accountability for school outcomes that maximizes teacher effectiveness, promotes collaboration, enlists colleagues to be part of a leadership team, and drives continuous improvement in instruction and student learning.

Functions

The teacher leader:

- Utilizes group processes to help colleagues and team members work collaboratively to solve problems, make decisions, manage conflict and promote meaningful change;
- Models effective skills in listening, presenting ideas, leading discussions, clarifying, mediating and identifying the needs of self and others in order to advance shared goals and professional learning;
- Employs facilitation skills to create trust among group members, develop collective wisdom, build ownership and action that supports student learning;
- Works to create an inclusive cohort of colleagues who turn to one another for learning, support and resources and who welcome diverse perspectives in addressing educational challenges; and
- Promotes the use of technology to create an intergenerational learning community that extends beyond the boundaries of the school or district.

Domain II: Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Achievement

The teacher leader understands how educational research is used to create new knowledge, promote specific policies and practices, improve instructional practice and make inquiry a critical component in teacher learning and school redesign; and uses this knowledge to model and facilitate colleagues' use of appropriate research-based strategies and data-driven action plans.

Functions

The teacher leader:

- Works with others to articulate opportunities/issues/challenges related to student learning, taking into account others' interests, knowledge and resources;
- Assists colleagues in accessing research, student learning data and other resources;
- Guides colleagues in selecting appropriate research-based strategies, designing action and other forms of research and measuring results;
- Facilitates the analysis of student learning data, collaborative interpretation of results and application of findings to revise instructional strategies and improve future educational results;
- Encourages colleagues to collaborate with the higher education community, foundations, nonprofit and other organizations engaged in researching critical educational issues; and
- Works with colleagues to interpret, communicate and disseminate findings of research related to student learning outcomes to members of the greater school community.

Domain III: Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement

The teacher leader understands the constantly evolving nature of teaching and learning, new and emerging technologies and changing community demographics; and uses this knowledge to promote and facilitate structured and job-embedded professional learning initiatives aligned to school improvement goals.

Functions

The teacher leader:

- Assesses colleagues' learning needs and works with administrators to ensure professional learning is collaborative, relevant, meaningful, differentiated and aligned with school/district improvement goals;
- Responds to the diverse learning needs of colleagues as well as students by identifying and promoting a variety of appropriate professional learning;
- Identifies appropriate technologies to promote collaborative and differentiated professional learning opportunities;
- Prepares colleagues to analyze and interpret student achievement data and other data to improve instruction and analyze the impact of instructional interventions on student learning;
- Advocates for sufficient time for colleagues to work in teams to engage in job-embedded professional learning, in which teachers collaboratively design instruction, develop new teaching strategies, utilize common assessments and analyze student work;
- Provides, where appropriate, feedback to colleagues to strengthen teaching practice and improve student learning; and
- Works with colleagues to collect, analyze and disseminate data relating to the impact and quality of professional learning initiatives on their own teaching practice and student learning to school administrators and members of the school community.

Domain IV: Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning

The teacher leader demonstrates a deep understanding of the teaching and learning process and uses this knowledge to advance the professional skills of colleagues by being a continuous learner, modeling reflective practice based on student results, and working collaboratively with colleagues to ensure instructional practices are aligned to a shared vision, mission and goal.

Functions

The teacher leader:

- Facilitates the collection and analysis of classroom- and school-based data to identify opportunities to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment;
- Engages in reflective dialog with colleagues based on observation of instruction, student work and assessment data and helps make connections to research-based effective practices;
- Supports colleagues' individual and collective professional growth by serving in roles such as a mentor, coach, content facilitator, critical friend or peer evaluator;
- Serves as a team leader to harness the skills, expertise and knowledge of colleagues to address curricular expectations and student learning needs;

- Uses knowledge of emerging technologies to guide colleagues in helping students skillfully and appropriately navigate the universe of knowledge available on the Internet, use social media to promote collaborative learning and connect with people and resources around the globe; and
- Promotes instructional strategies that address issues of diversity and equity in the classroom and ensures that individual student learning needs remain the central focus of instruction.

Domain V: Using Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement

The teacher leader is knowledgeable about current research on assessment methods, designing and/or selecting effective formative and summative assessment practices and use of assessment data to make informed decisions that improve student learning; and uses this knowledge to promote appropriate strategies that support continuous and sustainable organizational improvement.

Functions

The teacher leader:

- Increases the capacity of colleagues to access resources and expertise both inside and outside the district to help identify and use appropriate assessment instruments aligned to state and local standards;
- Facilitates teams of teachers in designing and implementing classroom-based formative assessments, scoring and interpreting student work and other performance data, and applying findings to improve educational practice and student achievement;
- Facilitates effective individual and team interactions that engage colleagues in collaborative conversations about student learning data and instructional practice, challenge them to develop solutions, and develop a climate of trust and critical reflection; and
- Works with colleagues to use assessment and data findings to recommend potential changes in organizational structure or practices that will enhance student achievement.

Domain VI: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community

The teacher leader understands that families, cultures and communities have a significant impact on educational processes and student achievement and uses this knowledge to promote frequent and more effective outreach with families, community members, business and community leaders and other stakeholders in the education system.

Functions

The teacher leader:

- Uses knowledge and understanding of the different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures and languages in the school community to promote effective interactions among colleagues, families and the larger community;
- Models effective communication and collaboration skills with families and other stakeholders focused on improving educational outcomes;
- Facilitates colleagues' self-examination of their own understandings of community culture and diversity and how they can be used to enrich the educational experiences of students and achieve high levels of learning for all students;

- Develops a shared understanding among colleagues of child/adolescent development and conditions in the home and community that impact student learning;
- Guides colleagues in identifying and accessing resources from community-based organizations to support student learning; and
- Collaborates with colleagues to develop comprehensive strategies, including the use of technology, for engaging families and community members as partners in the educational process.

Domain VII: Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession

The teacher leader understands how educational policy is made at the local, state and national level as well as the roles of school leaders, boards of education, legislators and other stakeholders in formulating those policies; and uses this knowledge to advocate for student needs and for practices that support effective teaching and increase student learning and to serve as an individual of influence and respect within the school, community and profession.

Functions

The teacher leader:

- Shares information with colleagues regarding how state and national trends and policies can impact classroom practices and expectations for student learning;
- Works with colleagues to identify and use research to advocate for teaching and learning processes that meet the needs of all students;
- Collaborates with colleagues to select appropriate opportunities to advocate for the rights and/or needs of students, to secure additional resources within the building or district that support student learning, and to communicate effectively with targeted audiences such as parents and community members;
- Advocates for professional resources, including financial support and human and other material resources, that allow colleagues to spend significant time learning about effective practices and developing a professional learning community focused on school improvement goals; and
- Represents and advocates for the profession in contexts outside of the classroom (e.g., being a member of committees or task forces addressing curriculum, assessment, professional development or other educational issues; participating in local, state or national educational professional associations or professional standards boards; serving as an assessor/scorer for state or national-level assessments of teachers or students).

Glossary of Terms

Action research: The process by which participants examine their own practice systematically and carefully, using techniques of research (Ferrance, 2000). Implicit in the term action research is the idea that teachers will begin a cycle of posing questions, gathering data, reflecting, deciding on a course of action, documenting results, and sharing findings with colleagues and the school community.

Advocate: To formulate a position and communicate it through a process that includes defining objectives, gathering facts to build a case, assessing and taking into account others' interests and resources, presenting a clear case and revising it in response to feedback. An advocate is one who speaks on behalf of the issue in question.

Coaching: A method of professional learning in which a teacher leader supports colleagues as they refine and improve practice.

Colleagues: Members of the school community, including teachers, administrators, specialists and others involved in the education of children at the school or district level.

Culture: A set of practices, shared attitudes, values and beliefs shared by a particular group or organization.

Data-driven decision making: A process of making educational decisions based on the analysis of classroom data and standardized test data. Data-driven decision making uses data on function, quantity and quality of inputs and how students learn to suggest educational solutions.

Differentiated instruction: The process by which several different learning experiences are offered to students within a lesson or series of lessons designed to meet students' varied needs or learning styles. This is also referred to as "individualized" or "customized" instruction.

Formative Assessment: A type of assessment closely related to the instructional process. Ideally, these assessments are incorporated into classroom practice where they provide the information needed to adjust teaching and learning on an ongoing basis. Thus, formative assessment informs both teachers and students about student understanding at a point when timely adjustments can be made.

Job-embedded learning: Planned and purposeful learning that occurs while teachers and administrators engage in their daily work. While simultaneously performing their job duties, participants specify goals for professional learning and achieve those goals through a process of collaboration with colleagues on matters related to their work. They learn by doing, reflecting on their experiences and then generating and sharing new insights and learning with one another.

Mentoring: This refers to a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable teacher helps a less experienced or less knowledgeable teacher develop the skills to be effective in the classroom, develop the ability to be reflective about his or her teaching and become an active member of the school community.

Professional learning community: A collaborative process in which teachers and other education professionals commit to engage in continuous improvement through ongoing professional learning. This process is characterized by collegial exchange in which educators work together to improve student learning by investigating problems; specifying goals for educator learning; engaging in collaborative learning through formal and informal professional learning strategies such as lesson study, examining student work and peer coaching; reflecting on practice; and holding one another accountable for improved practice and results.

Reflective practice: A concept first introduced by Donald Schön in his book *The Reflective Practitioner* in 1983. As defined by Schön, reflective practice involves thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the discipline. In education, it refers to the an educator examining his or her own teaching methods in light of how well students are learning, determining in collaboration with colleagues or coaches how to improve one's practice, examining the results of an intervention and making any necessary changes.

Research-based: Characterized as having been identified through research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to educational activities and programs.

School community: A group of people bound by a common interest in ensuring a high-quality education for all students in a school or district. School community members include, but are not limited to, students, teachers, administrators, school counselors, school support personnel, families, community agencies, businesses, residents and other partners in the educational process.

Summative assessment: A structured and standardized means of measuring student progress. These assessments are given periodically to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know. Many people associate summative assessments only with standardized tests such as state assessments, but they are also used as part of district and classroom programs such as end-of-course exams, benchmark tests and end-of-unit tests. Summative assessment at the district/classroom level is an accountability measure that is generally used as part of the grading process.

Stakeholders: All those who are significantly affected by or desire to influence specific programs or policies. This can include educators, parents, community members, teachers' associations and legislators.