
Preface

This book focuses on teachers as leaders and the importance of teacher leadership to improved outcomes in our schools. America's schools draw vitality from the creativity and commitment of their teachers. Teachers, the largest group of potential adult leaders in schools, hold the most promise for unlimited contributions to school change. The efforts of dedicated, talented teachers have always provided the energy needed to make schools sensitive to the needs of each generation of students.

Dramatic changes in the world and the increased pressures placed on schools to support the nation's economy create a context that makes it impossible to respond as we have in the past. Facing the increasing pressures of testing and more accountability, schools experiment with a multitude of change efforts, and still the media, the public, and even educators bemoan our schools' inadequate progress in meeting the needs of all of our students. Neither legislative mandates, nor central office directives, nor principal-initiated projects will result in the major change needed. There is clearly, however, hope through increased opportunities for teachers serving as instructional leaders and assuming other leadership functions to move our educational systems toward meeting expectations that have thus far been unfulfilled. In fact, Melissa Rasberry, a colleague at the Center for Teaching Quality, said, "The stars are aligning for teacher leadership," and indeed they are.

Our experience with teacher leaders reveals that they are already making a difference in teaching and learning in many schools. It is out of this experience that we recognize the critical nature of the role that teacher leaders must play if visions and hopes for schools are to be realized. Teacher leaders provide the key to sustaining meaningful change in schools. As part of our work over the years, we attempted to identify the knowledge and

skills that are characteristic of outstanding teacher leaders. Once these were identified, we realized that little of the knowledge and few of the skills are taught in most teacher preparation programs. Also, inadequate attention is given to teacher leadership development within schools and districts. Further, the structure and norms within schools and the lack of understanding among principals, superintendents, and district staff often inhibit the emergence of teacher leadership. To address this need, we focused our efforts on the development needs of teacher leaders. By relying on the knowledge acquired throughout our careers in school reform and by acknowledging the leadership of which teachers are capable, we strengthened our belief in the power of teacher leadership to make a difference.

In this third edition, we share our experience and the insights gained over the past two decades of studying and observing the work of teacher leaders. We add to our definition of teacher leadership and include new content related to the evolution of teacher leadership since the second edition was written. We offer thoughts on promoting teacher leadership. We include our recent thinking on the career-long development of teacher leaders, beginning with preservice preparation programs and continuing through to ongoing support for experienced teacher leaders. New content focuses on the implications of generational differences among faculty members and offers clues to building relationships with those who bring diverse perspectives to the workplace. The school context for supporting teacher leadership is analyzed, and we offer a set of dimensions evident in schools where teacher leadership is thriving. We share three factors critical to sustaining teacher leadership in schools, including (1) the relationships among adults in the school, (2) the school's organizational structure, and (3) the actions of the principal. In this edition, we provide more fully developed ideas on steps for teacher leaders to take in influencing colleagues, their schools, and their districts. Focusing on the vast numbers of teachers now serving as instructional leaders, we acquaint readers of this new edition with timely, new content related to the four challenges many teacher leaders face: deciding to accept a leadership role, building principal–teacher leader relationships, working with peers, and facilitating professional learning for self and others. Finally, we disclose our thinking about teacher leadership in the future, including areas for advocacy and change to assure that future is a positive one.

The third edition contains updated references from teacher leadership literature and research throughout each chapter. The content is further enhanced by the inclusion of two new instruments, the Teacher Leadership Self-Assessment and the Teacher Leadership School Survey. Other instruments provided include the Readiness for Teacher Leadership Survey and the Philosophy of Education Inventory. These instruments offer readers unique measures that can be used by potential and practicing teacher leaders. In addition, new print and online resources are provided to aid those who wish to study teacher leadership in greater depth.

We are pleased that there is a growing trend to honor teacher leadership and to build teachers' leadership skills, because we wrote the first edition of this book in hope of awakening this sleeping giant over a decade ago. This book will benefit all those interested in understanding the power of teacher leadership and in helping teachers develop as leaders. The responsibility for advocating teacher leadership falls on the shoulders of people in diverse roles, including principals, superintendents, district staff, college and university personnel, and especially teachers themselves. We need the attention of all these groups. In this third edition, we have reexamined the teacher leadership beliefs we have held and matched these beliefs with our more recent experiences. Our ideas are, as always, guided by our interactions with teacher leaders around the country. In this third edition, we share what we have learned about teacher leadership with those who wish to capitalize on this vital resource.

The journey of developing teachers as leaders is one that we have been on throughout our careers. It is our hope that everyone with a stake in assuring success for all students in our nation's schools will join us on this journey and that the ideas proposed in this book will be helpful to all of you.