

## Resource 3. Teacher Leadership Approaches and Strategies

There are three categories of approaches that states and districts can take to promote or support teacher leadership: creating enabling conditions, providing implementation guidance and resources, and providing funding or incentives (see Figure 3). Within each of these categories are nine different types of strategies that states and districts can take to foster teacher leadership; likewise, there are multiple approaches to designing and implementing each strategy depending on the state or district context. This resource provides information, considerations, and state examples for each approach.

**Figure 3. State Approaches to Teacher Leadership**

Create Enabling Conditions	Provide Guidance and Resources	Provide Funding or Incentives
States and districts establish policies or systems that recognize teacher leadership roles and opportunities, or remove policy barriers that may inhibit teacher leadership roles, opportunities or interest.	States and districts provide guidance and resources on teacher leadership models, approaches, and best practices to support effective implementation at the school level.	States and districts provide funding or incentives to drive local implementation of teacher leadership models.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remove regulatory barriers</li> <li>2. Adopt teacher leader standards, licensure, or evaluation systems</li> <li>3. Revise principal standards and/or evaluation systems to address differentiated leadership responsibilities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Provide usable data to districts</li> <li>5. Disseminate information on best practices, tools, and teacher leadership models</li> <li>6. Provide professional development to teacher leaders and school leaders</li> <li>7. Foster or support collaborations, networks, and convenings</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Establish or revise a differentiated compensation policy</li> <li>9. Use federal and state funds to incentivize and support teacher leadership roles</li> </ol>

### 1. Remove Regulatory Barriers

States and districts can create conditions for teacher leadership to flourish by removing regulatory barriers, policies, or other rules that prevent the best teachers from seeking leadership roles. States and districts may consider gathering feedback via focus groups or forums of teachers and administrators to better understand how current policies may be helping or hindering their teacher leadership efforts.

Policies that potentially could be examined for barriers (and possible solutions) include budget policies, human resources policies, and student credit policies.

## Budget Policies

- **Pay scale and staffing restrictions:** Policies that set school staffing criteria or pay scales tied to specific job titles may restrict or limit teacher leader salaries or job titles, which can make it challenging to implement formal teacher leader roles. States or districts may need to modify these policies to be more flexible, enabling teacher leader roles to evolve more quickly over time, or may modify these policies to include formal teacher roles.
- **Budget structure restrictions:** Policies that prohibit districts or schools from combining separate budget lines can limit leaders' abilities to allocate funding for formal teacher leader roles through existing budget allocations. States or districts may need to modify these policies to allow exceptions for supporting stipends for teacher leadership roles.
- **Professional learning funding restrictions:** Policies that limit the use of state funding to specific types of professional learning may discourage or prevent districts from using teacher leaders to tailor professional learning opportunities. States or districts may modify policies to allow state funds to be used for professional learning that is tailored to local needs (as identified through teacher leaders or through other needs assessments). States and districts may also consider making professional learning job embedded, which can allow state-directed professional learning funds (e.g., Title II funds) to be used for stipends for teacher leader roles such as coaches or team leads.

## Human Resources Policies

- **Teacher-of-record and attribution policies:** If evaluation systems can link student data assigned only to teachers of record, it may be difficult to create teacher leader roles that include shared accountability for student results (in which the teacher leader is accountable for the results of a team of teachers and their students). States and districts may need to modify evaluation systems to allow more flexible attribution processes within the evaluation system.

## Student Credit Policies

- **Class size maximums and seat time minimums:** Policies that set class size and seat time minimums can prevent schools from establishing lead teacher roles and other instructional models that use teams of teacher leaders and teachers. By making these policies more flexible, states and districts can make many promising instructional models possible.
- **Teacher of record and credit policies:** Policies that link student achievement to only one teacher can make it difficult to create roles in which the teacher leader is accountable for the results of a team of teachers and their students.

## Examples

- *Texas* allows “Districts of Innovation,” in which a local school district has greater control over teacher contracts, salary schedules, and teacher evaluation systems, among other things. An innovation district can be established by a two-thirds vote of the local school board, following a majority vote of the district-level, site-based management committee, provided the district has an “acceptable” accountability rating.

- In *Massachusetts*, “level 5” schools (schools in need of the most support and under direct oversight by the state) are able to adjust their salary structures to connect pay with performance.

## 2. Adopt Teacher Leader Standards, Teacher Leader Licensure, or Teacher Leader Evaluation Systems

**Standards.** Teacher leader standards can provide clarity on the expected knowledge, skills, and capacities needed to be effective as a teacher leader, informing role design, job descriptions, hiring criteria, and evaluation criteria. States and districts can create or adopt standards based on the actual teacher leader roles available and the skills they require.

For more information on existing standards and frameworks, see [Resource 2: Teacher Leader Role Profiles](#).

**Licensure.** States may consider creating a generic or specialized teacher leader licensure informed by teacher leader standards, which may be used as part of hiring criteria or differentiated pay for teacher leader roles. It is important to note that while many colleges and universities offer teacher leadership endorsements, candidates with these endorsements may or may not have developed the key knowledge and skills necessary for a specific teacher leadership role. States and districts may recommend using licensure and endorsement as a source of evidence rather than as a set of criteria when hiring for teacher leadership roles, enabling candidates to demonstrate key knowledge and skills in a variety of ways.

For more information on teacher leader licensure, see [Resource 5: Approaches to Teacher Leader Licensure and Endorsement](#).

**Teacher evaluation.** Most formal teacher leadership roles include both instructional and leadership responsibilities. Therefore, teacher leaders in these roles often spend a significant amount of time engaged in activities that are not typically captured in state teaching standards or teacher evaluation rubrics (e.g., coaching, school-level decision making). Evaluating teacher leaders through a standard teacher evaluation system may be appropriate for roles in which teachers maintain typical teaching responsibilities alongside additional leadership responsibilities; however, some potential candidates may be less likely to take on roles with more significant leadership responsibilities if their pay, tenure, or other key human resources decisions are linked to an evaluation that does not closely align with their regular responsibilities. Evaluators may also face more scheduling or logistical challenges observing the practice of teacher leaders who spend limited time providing direct instruction to students.

States and districts can use teacher leader standards as the basis for a teacher leader evaluation system, which may necessitate new types of evidence collection or data sources in the evaluation process. Depending on the type of teacher leader role, some districts may choose to use existing evaluation systems (either teacher or school leader). Alternatively, states or districts can create teacher leader evaluation systems that reflect the specific roles, responsibilities, and standards of practice for teacher leaders.

## State Examples

- **Kentucky** developed a [teacher leadership framework](#) that defines the mission of teacher leadership as “elevating teachers as experts and leaders in and beyond the classroom.” The framework defines teacher leadership on six dimensions: in the classroom, modeling/coaching, leading groups or teams, increasing teacher voice and influence, professionalizing teaching, and connecting to the larger community and world. Kentucky created a video to explain the teacher leadership framework to stakeholders.
- **Tennessee** developed a set of [competencies](#) for teacher leadership through its 2016 Teacher Leadership microcredential pilot, designed to inform and support professional learning of teachers statewide.
- **Georgia** has a state [teacher leader license endorsement](#) that requires teacher leaders to receive intensive coaching, have an individualized growth plan, provide work samples that indicate they have met program standards, and have 3 years of experience and a master’s degree, at minimum. The state also provides a set of seven standards around which educator preparation programs must design their endorsement. Topics include design and implementation of professional learning, working with stakeholders to develop school culture, developing a comprehensive understanding of curriculum and assessment, modeling best practices and mentoring others, engaging in data-driven decision making, conducting and applying research, and collaborating with stakeholders to improve student learning.
- The **Tennessee** State Board of Education adopted the [Teacher Leader Model Standards](#), which were used as a foundation for developing model teacher leadership approaches. Tennessee districts have flexibility in whether they use the classroom evaluation model or instructional coach evaluation model for teacher leaders in hybrid roles.
- **North Carolina** is developing a specialized evaluation for Multi-Classroom Teachers based on the expansion of these roles statewide.

## 3. Revise Principal Standards and/or Evaluation Systems to Address Differentiated Leadership Responsibilities

Some standards and evaluation frameworks for school leaders include differentiated leadership within school culture indicators, but they do not explicitly refer to support for or interaction with teacher leaders. States and districts can ensure that school leaders are prepared to support differentiated leadership structures and teacher leaders themselves by ensuring that school leader evaluation systems (and standards) reflect these skills and responsibilities. These can also drive shifts in principal preparation and training.

### State Examples

- **Tennessee** embedded a teacher leadership indicator in the revised [Tennessee Instructional Leadership and Principal Standards](#), which encourages school leaders to focus on differentiated leadership skills and fostering the conditions for their teacher leaders to be successful.

- *Colorado* includes an indicator specifically addressing differentiated leadership practices in the state model [principal evaluation system](#).
- *New Jersey* includes supporting teacher leadership opportunities as a critical attribute in its [principal evaluation rubric](#).

#### 4. Provide Data to Inform Teacher Leadership Systems

To create the conditions necessary for teacher leadership to thrive, states can ensure that districts have the information they need to select, develop, and gauge the impact of their teacher leaders. States can draw from their comprehensive data warehouses to provide districts with regularly updated reports on evaluation, teacher and principal retention, student achievement and equity gaps, and talent pipelines. States can also provide guidance for districts on how to use these data. For example, they can provide guiding questions and templates for district analysis. States and districts may need to modify data systems to capture the impact of teacher leader activities on teacher practice and student learning.

##### State Examples

- The *New York City* Department of Education developed a [Smart Retention Report](#) as a resource to help schools understand their staffing patterns and inform their decisions and conversations related to talent and staffing.
- *New York* created a presentation for its state department of education to tell the story, grounded in data, of the problems teacher leadership could address.
- Districts in *Tennessee* developed presentations for their school boards on why teacher leadership matters and included research-based talking points about the effectiveness of teacher leadership. Tennessee also focuses talking points on how teacher leadership fits the needs of their stakeholders rather than the needs of the state.

#### 5. Disseminate Information on Best Practices, Tools, and Teacher Leadership Models

States and districts may create and distribute toolkits, best practices, models, or tools on how to best design and implement teacher leadership models at the school or district level. States and districts may also gather and share emerging best practices and lessons learned from current teacher leadership initiatives. States and districts can ensure that shared resources on teacher leadership can meaningfully inform implementation by aligning resources to local needs, ensuring that resources are well organized or easily searchable, and adaptable to local needs. While many states, districts, and organizations have shared information on teacher leadership in general, states and districts can entice local leaders to engage in teacher leadership by focusing on specific teacher leadership models and roles and by clearly articulating the potential impact of these models and roles.

States and districts may consider sharing the following resources from this toolkit to inform local leaders involved in designing teacher leadership initiatives:

- Resource 1: Teacher Leadership Approaches: Example Theories of Action
- Resource 2: Teacher Leader Role Profiles

- Resource 4: Teacher Leadership Models: Examples and Opportunities for Innovation
- Resource 6: Approaches to Professional Learning for Teacher Leaders
- Resource 7: Approaches to Promoting Equity Through Teacher Leadership
- Resource 9: Ensuring Sustainability: Collecting Data on Teacher Leadership Implementation and Impact

In addition, states and districts may consider developing the following resources and sharing them with local leaders:

- Cost structure models for specific teacher leadership roles
- Hiring protocols and guidance for school leaders
- Talking points for performance evaluation conversations
- Sample or other communication tools
- Teacher leader evaluation models or guidance
- Teacher leader professional development plan models or guidance
- Library of sample teacher leader job descriptions
- Meeting protocols

### State Examples

- *Iowa* developed and shared a number of tools to support its [Teacher Leadership and Compensation](#) districts via a virtual platform. This platform brings together teacher leaders and school leaders across the state to access resources and learning opportunities and to collaborate on implementation. Resources on the site include self-assessments, articles, modules, community forums, and an events calendar of professional development opportunities. Site resources are organized by focus area (adult learning, collaborative culture, communication, content pedagogy and assessment, systems thinking, and data and organizational leadership).
- *New York* created a comprehensive webpage to house key information, deadlines, and resources for its [Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness](#) districts. The website includes a comprehensive array of tools, including overview slide decks describing the state’s teacher leadership approach, goals and theory of action, reflections and advice from successful district models, sample job descriptions, and sample school readiness criteria.
- *Massachusetts* shares lessons learned from districts through the state’s teacher leadership [professional learning network](#) and offers several case studies of districts’ teacher leadership efforts on the state website.
- *Tennessee* has a [teacher leader guidebook](#) that profiles small, medium, and large districts across the state that are implementing teacher leadership models. The guidebook shares information and lessons learned through implementation in each district.

## 6. Provide Professional Development to Teacher Leaders and School Leaders

States and districts can provide teacher leaders with professional development on specific competencies or skills, such as providing performance feedback or facilitating collaborative teams, or on specific content areas aligned with teacher leadership roles (e.g., science and technology mentor teachers). States and districts can also offer school leaders professional development on differentiated leadership structures and supports. These professional development efforts may be designed as a “train the trainer” model, enabling teacher leaders to share professional learning with a broader group of educators than state or district staff otherwise might be able to reach directly, and with principals, who can then adapt what they learn to train additional teachers and/or create teacher leadership models. States or groups of smaller districts may also form networks of teacher leaders to share professional learning costs and build their capacity to support teacher learning.

### State Examples

- In *Iowa*, the state Department of Education created a [Teacher Leadership and Compensation \(TLC\)](#) support team. The purpose of this team is to identify, coordinate, and provide learning and professional development opportunities statewide, as well as ensure consistent messaging about the TLC initiative throughout the state.
- *New Jersey* developed an [Achievement Coaches program](#) in which coaches could earn a stipend to create sessions and provide turnkey training to their peers on topics such as standards-aligned assessments and evidence-based conversations.
- Between 2012 and 2015, the *Tennessee* State Department of Education trained 1,370 local educators to serve as Learning Leaders to facilitate summer trainings on Tennessee’s new academic content standards in math and English language arts to approximately 62,000 teachers statewide. This peer training model developed the capacity of Learning Leaders and their peer educators, and fulfills the state’s goal of aligning instruction statewide to the new academic content standards. The initiative was initially funded through a Race to the Top grant and later was supported by state and Title IIA funds in 2015.
- *Massachusetts* created a district [Professional Learning Network](#), which forged strategic partnerships between a small group of districts and state staff to learn from each other. The network helps drive districts toward distributed leadership and focuses on educators receiving high-quality feedback, promoting teacher leadership opportunities, reducing evaluator workload, and advancing a culture of collaboration. The network meets monthly to share district progress on related initiatives, problem solve, and discuss ideas.

## 7. Foster or Support Collaborations, Networks, and Convenings

There is great value in states, districts, and schools coming together to learn from one another. States and districts may convene to share successes, lessons learned, and strategies for overcoming challenges related to teacher leadership implementation. States and districts may consider assembling vertical teams of teachers, teacher leaders, and school leaders rather than homogenous groups. Furthermore, states and districts can foster communication and collaboration across institutions of higher education, professional organizations, and regional professional learning centers with state and district staff.

## State Examples

- **Tennessee** created the Tennessee [Teacher Leader Network](#), which represents the geographic, socioeconomic, and demographic diversity of the state, and each member sends a diverse district team to monthly network meetings. Through state grants, networked districts develop adaptable, innovative teacher leadership models aligned to their specific strategic plans and reflecting the professional development needs of their educators. Tennessee has published three annual teacher leader guidebooks including a district overview, rationale for teacher leadership, roles and responsibilities, key strategies, suggested best practices, implementation timeline, communication strategies, and cost.
- **Kentucky** has a variety of initiatives that include teacher leadership opportunities, such as the [Activating Teacher Leadership Institutes](#), [Instructional Transformation](#) coaching and support, Empowering Effective Educators project, and the [Next Generation Leadership Networks](#). Kentucky has worked to leverage learnings and best practices from these activities, along with tools and additional information, via the state website. Kentucky also provides state-level professional learning opportunity for teacher leaders involved in these initiatives.
- The **Illinois** P20 Council’s [Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Committee](#) engages more than 160 leaders and reports to the Secretary of Education. The P20 Council surveys teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members on teacher leadership; shares research and practices through monthly meetings and webinars; and arranges national speakers. In addition, the Illinois Teacher Leadership Network (ITLN) is composed of networked leaders from 21 organizations. The ITLN has accomplished the following:
  - Developed an Illinois teacher leadership framework;
  - Gathered information on teacher leadership programs in Illinois schools and districts;
  - Expanded the Illinois State Teacher of the Year and ITLN website(s) to include teacher leadership resources; and
  - Hosted a Powered by Teach to Lead summit.
- **Massachusetts** launched the [Teacher Advisory Cabinet](#) (TAC) in 2014 to bring together teachers from across the state to provide crucial feedback on and input into state policies and resources. Members are selected through a competitive application process; in 2015–16, 36 teachers participated. Massachusetts also hosts an annual Spring Convening that brings together educators to share best practices on teacher leadership.
- **Louisiana** hosts a [teacher leader collaboration summit](#) each year, during which teachers and teacher leaders share materials, create networks and connections, and engage in professional learning. This summit is part of a broader teacher leadership initiative in the state, including content expert teacher leader roles (for more information, see [Resource 2: Teacher Leader Role Profiles](#)).
- **New Mexico** hosts a [yearly summit](#) during which teacher leaders provide professional learning sessions to other educators in collaboration with other experts. These summits give teacher leaders an opportunity to develop presentation and facilitation skills and enable other teachers to learn from their expertise.



## 8. Establish or Revise a Differentiated Compensation Policy

To integrate teacher leadership into their structures and systems, states must make significant efforts to create and pass policies that advance the work and professional careers of teacher leaders. Developing career ladder, compensation, and evaluation policies that enable and support teacher leadership can be one of the most challenging, but also influential, efforts that states undertake to advance teacher leadership.

States and districts may consider using the following resources to inform compensation budget planning for teacher leaders:

- [Budget Hold'Em](https://www.erstrategies.org/hldm/game_templates/budget-hold-em-for-districts/games/new) from Education Resource Strategies: This resource enables school and district leaders to explore conversations about budget tradeoffs, transformational instruction, and student impact. For more information, visit [https://www.erstrategies.org/hldm/game\\_templates/budget-hold-em-for-districts/games/new](https://www.erstrategies.org/hldm/game_templates/budget-hold-em-for-districts/games/new).
- [Financial Transparency and Reporting Readiness Assessment Tool](https://statesupportnetwork.ed.gov/resources/financial-transparency-tool) from the State Support Network: This tool can help states and districts identify and analyze school level expenditure data. For more information, visit <https://statesupportnetwork.ed.gov/resources/financial-transparency-tool>.
- [How to Pay Teachers Dramatically More, Within Budget](http://opportunityculture.org/how-to-pay-teachers-dramatically-more-within-budget-2/) from Public Impact: This resource outlines financial analyses of schools implementing the Opportunity Culture model and how they utilize existing budgets to fund teacher leader roles. For more information, visit <http://opportunityculture.org/how-to-pay-teachers-dramatically-more-within-budget-2/>.
- [Six Ways to Pay All Teachers More Within Budget](http://opportunityculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Six_Ways_to_Pay_All_Teachers_More_Within_Budget-Public_Impact.pdf) from Public Impact: This brief offers lessons learned through the Opportunity Culture initiative on how to design sustainable school funding. For more information, visit [http://opportunityculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Six\\_Ways\\_to\\_Pay\\_All\\_Teachers\\_More\\_Within\\_Budget-Public\\_Impact.pdf](http://opportunityculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Six_Ways_to_Pay_All_Teachers_More_Within_Budget-Public_Impact.pdf).

### State Examples

- *Tennessee* developed a state policy that required districts to reform their salary structures with a [differentiated pay policy](#). Statewide, more than 80% of districts have selected a teacher leader role (additional pay for additional responsibilities) plan. These plans align educator roles, positions, and salaries to reflect the importance of shared leadership at the district and school levels, and they promise to increase recruitment and retention of effective educators. Positions are funded through a combination of state and local funds.

## 9. Use Funds to Incentivize and Support Teacher Leadership Roles

Providing grant funding is a clear and direct strategy for states and districts to support and foster teacher leadership at the local level. These grants are often designed to support initial implementation of teacher leadership systems, requiring local schools to identify new formal roles or activities for teacher leaders over time. Grants can be used in tandem with a teacher leadership approach that the state or district desires to spread and replicate, or they may be used to test new and innovative

approaches. States and districts may also consider how strict the application criteria may need to be based on the funding available and the number of potential applicants.

When setting grant requirements, states and districts may ask applicants to do the following:

- Define roles and responsibilities for teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators;
- Describe how the program or initiative design will leverage and build on existing resources (including human capital) and successes;
- Describe how the program or initiative design reflects best practices from successful teacher leadership models;
- Describe fiscal sustainability plans; and
- Outline evaluation metrics and include agreements for data collection and sharing.

States can use grant funding to support the growth of teacher leadership in different settings (e.g., creating cohorts of grantees based on district size) or to gradually scale teacher leadership models that show initial success.

### State Examples

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- **Kentucky** designed a competitive [grant program](#) for schools interested in demonstrating current or planned strategies to utilize effective teachers in teacher leadership roles. The Empowering Effective Educators Grant provides schools with funds to design and implement a teacher leadership structure that builds staff and recognizes teacher leaders' impact on schools' continuous improvement.
- **Nevada's** [Great Teaching and Leading fund](#) provides funding for teacher leader professional development, including approaches to leveraging teacher leadership (e.g., peer assistance and review).
- **Iowa's** [Teacher Leadership and Compensation](#) (TLC) System provides grant funding to districts to implement teacher leadership systems. The TLC System requires multiple, differentiated, meaningful teacher leadership roles; a rigorous selection process and aligned professional development for new teacher roles; and a new minimum teacher salary. Iowa created a support team to provide guidance on the professional development offerings across the state to ensure that targeted, high-quality professional development is available to all local education agencies and principals. Additionally, Iowa developed the Agora platform to provide resources and learning opportunities to teacher leaders and administrators to support implementation. Iowa uses multiple approaches to gather implementation and impact information from grantee districts, including district end-of-year reports, implementation visits to schools and districts, surveys, and external evaluation.