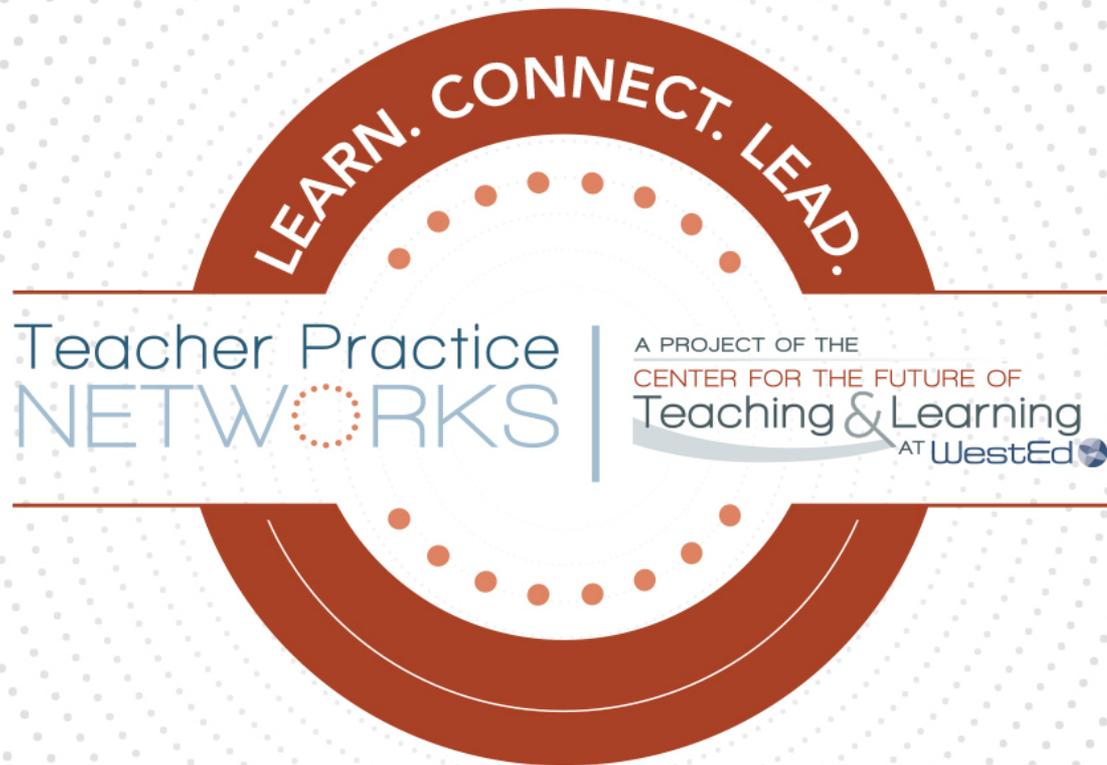


Teachers as Instructional Leaders and How District Staff Can Support Them

June 2, 2017



Forging Partnerships

A Model for Teacher Leadership Development



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CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF
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CENTERVIEW
Informing Leaders on Innovative Practices
in Teaching and Learning

MAY 2017
CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF
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Forging partnerships A MODEL FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Teacher leaders can play an important role in school improvement efforts, but require district support to effectively lead their peers. Partnering with outside organizations is one way that districts can deepen their capacity to support and sustain teacher leadership.

In the current landscape of rigorous standards implementation, teacher leadership is gaining increased attention and interest as a school improvement practice. Moreover, the Every Student Succeeds Act calls out teacher leadership as an intervention strategy, and recent research¹ points to effective teacher leaders as a positive influence on teacher professional learning and on teacher retention.

However, to be effective, teacher leaders need to be well supported by their districts. In this issue of CenterView, we describe how districts can foster strong teacher leadership — specifically, we highlight the promising strategy of partnering with an outside organization to help develop and sustain teacher leaders districtwide.

Teacher leader = classroom teacher + peer instructional leader

Without a common definition of teacher leadership among educators and researchers, one can look across districts and find a range of roles for teacher leaders, from student data administrator to school programs coordinator. The Center for the Future of Teaching & Learning at WestEd (The Center) believes strongly that teacher leaders can demonstrate the greatest impact at their schools when acting as peer instructional leaders. The Center defines teacher leaders as classroom teachers who exhibit strong standards-aligned instructional practices and who collaborate with peers to influence, improve, and transform teaching and learning. This definition is informed by research from the field² and by our work steering the Teacher Practice Networks (TPN), a five-year initiative involving 38 member organizations helping teachers align instruction to college- and career-ready standards.

By design, all of the nearly 800 teacher leaders participating in the TPN are current classroom teachers. Their ability to speak first-hand to experiences implementing particular pedagogical approaches or new standards-based curricula positions teacher leaders to build critical, trusting relationships with the teachers they lead and support. As insiders, teacher leaders have the credibility to cultivate a safe space for honest, productive reflection about changing practice in a way that administrators and outsiders do not.

The teacher leaders in the TPN are seen as “lead learners” who model a mindset of continual growth. They are focused both on actively improving their own teaching practice and directly helping peers to improve their standards-aligned

1. Hattie, J. A., & Campbell, C. (2017). The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(2), 156-171.

2. For example, Hattie and Campbell (2017) conducted an extensive literature review of studies from the past decade that examined teacher leaders who both teach 6-12 students in their classrooms and lead learning with teachers.

The Center for the Future of Teaching & Learning at WestEd (1)

Webinar Overview

- Teacher Leader Roles and Responsibilities
- District-Organization Partnerships



Figure 1. Framework for Teacher Practice Network Teacher Leader Roles and Responsibilities

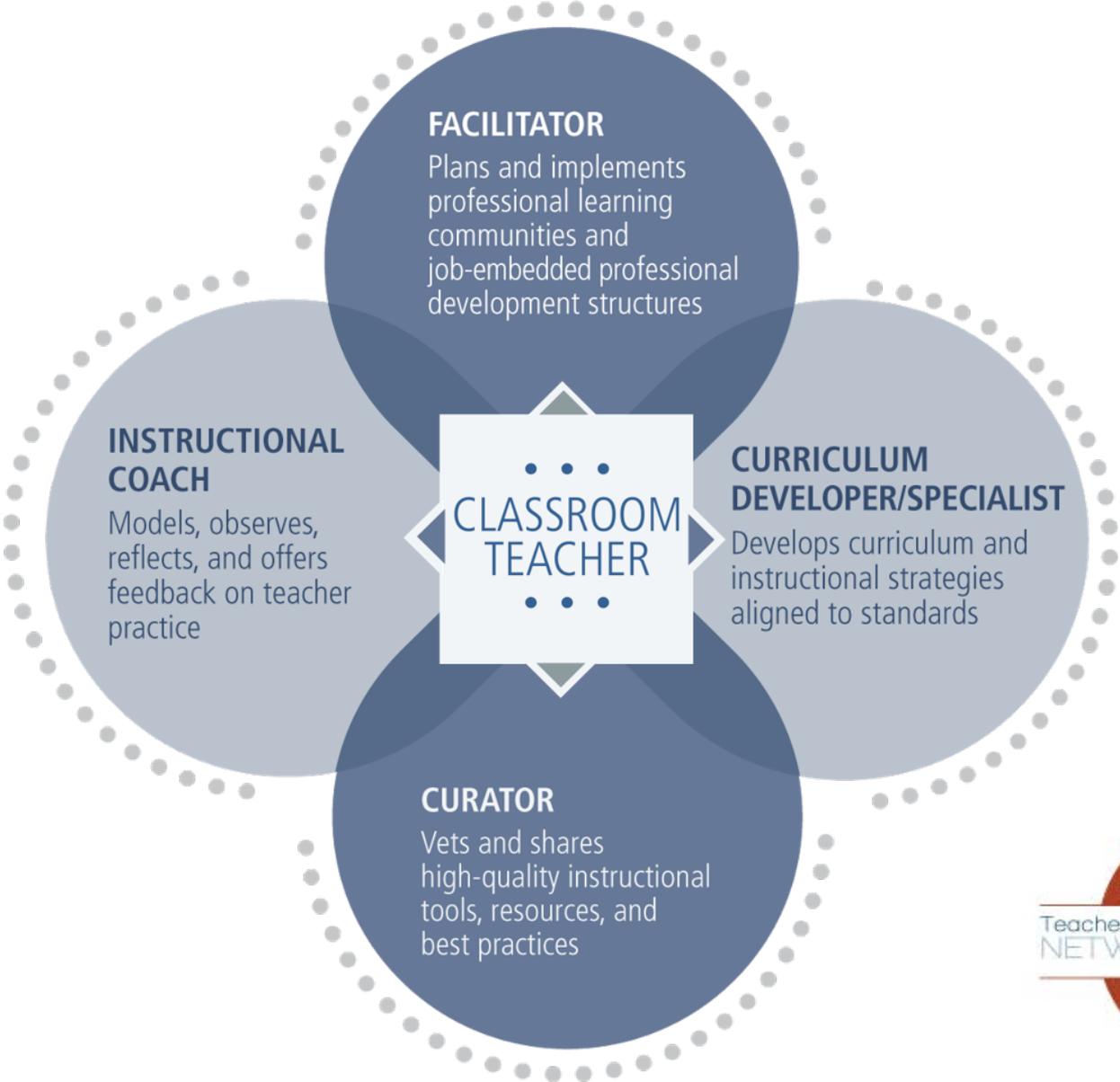


Figure 2. District-Organization Partnership

Contributions to Support Teacher Leadership



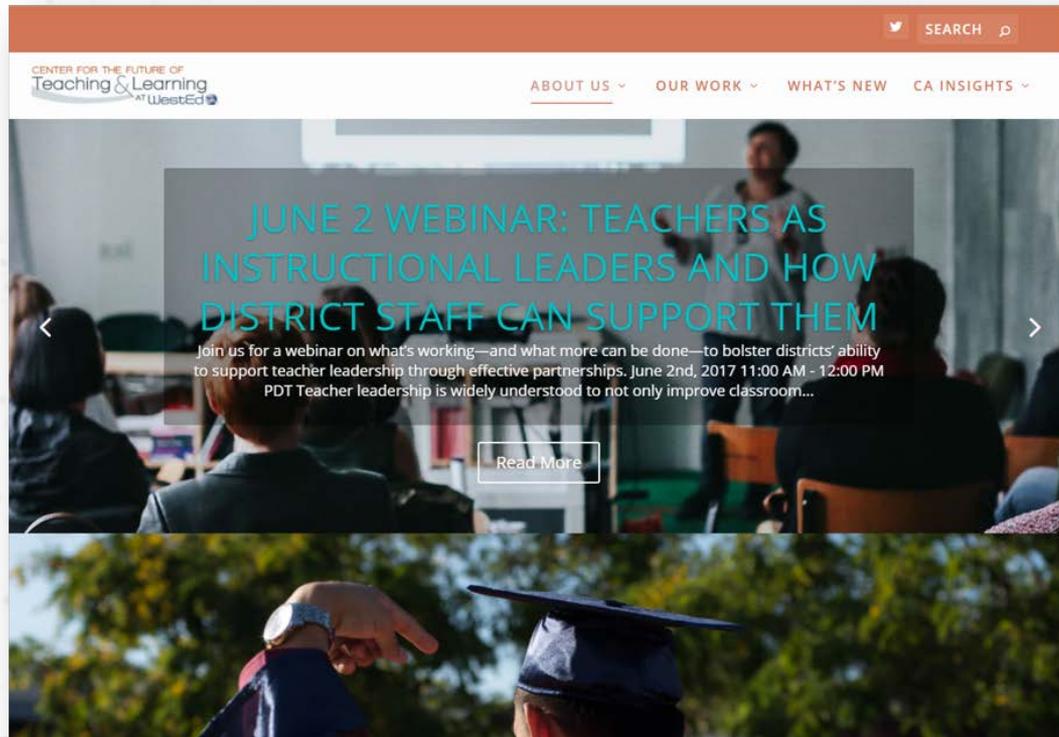
District-Organization Partnerships

DePaul University Leading with Algebra
and Chicago Public Schools

Teach Plus and Shelby County District



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