

Educator Work Group Recommendations

May 2016

Dear Delaware Teacher Leader Pilot School Leaders,

Since the start of the 2015-2016 school year, the Educator Work Group—comprised of teachers from each of Delaware’s counties and various school types—has addressed many questions that have been raised about teacher leadership opportunities over the last two years. The result of their work is a series of recommendations guiding the DDOE’s launch of Delaware’s 2016-2017 Teacher Leader Pilot, and, more broadly, is being considered by the CAECC to inform the Governor’s legislative proposal on teacher leadership. Those recommendations cover the following subjects related to the pilot:

- Titles and descriptions of the five teacher leader roles
- “Foot in the classroom” definition and release time for teacher leaders
- The teacher leader selection process and criteria
- The role of teacher leaders in educator evaluation
- Compensation for teacher leaders
- Teacher leader performance evaluation
- The duration of teacher leader roles
- Support for teacher leaders
- Teacher leader pilot feedback
- Teacher Leader roles, desired outcomes, responsibilities, and focus areas

The DDOE is committed to implementing the EWG’s pilot recommendations and will be using this document as a guide to develop supports and processes throughout the pilot year. Following is a document that summarizes those recommendations. If you have any questions about the contents of this document or the process the EWG undertook to arrive at these recommendations, then please contact Brian Slocum from TNTTP at brian.slocum@tntp.org.

Sincerely,

Angeline Rivello
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DDOE

Model Teacher Leader Roles

The table below provides a brief overview of the five teacher leader roles the EWG recommends creating. Additional detail about specific desired outcomes and responsibilities is provided in the section, “*Teacher Leader Desired Outcomes, Responsibilities, and Focus Areas.*” Desired outcomes are intended to be school goals Leads could help advance. These goals would have shared responsibility and are not meant to be criteria on which teacher leaders are officially evaluated.

Instructional Practice Lead	Instructional Practice Leads will improve the instructional practice of fellow educators using a variety of high-impact support strategies focused on frequent, targeted feedback in educators’ development areas. These include co-planning, co-teaching, modeling lessons and providing non-evaluative observations. Instructional Practice Leads will support educators from different content areas, adapting coaching as necessary to help them meet their development goals.
Digital Content Lead	Digital Content Leads will help educators they support build their instructional technology knowledge so more students have access to technology that helps improve their academic outcomes. In addition to researching and modeling best practices with their own students, Digital Content Leads will connect educators to technology resources and host professional learning sessions on how to integrate digital content and technology into instruction.
Instructional Strategy Lead	Instructional Strategy Leads will introduce research-based instructional strategies into schools to help educators meet their development needs and to help schools meet their academic goals. These teacher leaders will collaborate with school leadership to identify areas of need and agree on research priorities. They will then research instructional strategy best practices in those areas and lead efforts to integrate the most promising strategies into classrooms.
Community Partnerships Lead	Community Partnerships Leads will help students gain access to services designed to improve their physical and mental health, giving them a greater chance at academic success. They will design initiatives and build partnerships to provide these supports and train teachers on effective student interventions to address challenges to student well-being and readiness to learn.
Instructional Culture Lead	Instructional Culture Leads will help schools build a philosophy around culture, discipline and culturally responsive teaching. They will also help educators implement strategies aimed to improve classroom culture. By fostering positive school culture and refining classroom management techniques, these teacher leaders will support school-wide efforts to increase student engagement, boost attendance rates and reduce student discipline incidents.

Foot in Classroom and Release Time

The EWG recommends that teacher leaders retain a “foot in the classroom”, whereby teacher leaders continue to work directly with students and substantively retain their original educator responsibilities. While the group acknowledges that this will look different for different schools and teacher leader roles, it acknowledged that educators spending less than half of their work day on their current educator responsibilities could be perceived as no longer having a “foot in the classroom.”

The EWG recommends the following language as a revised version of the CAECC’s preliminary recommendations from June 2015 around “foot in classroom”:

Teacher Leaders should retain a “foot in the classroom” through significant direct impact on student academic growth as normally conducted in their core role as a classroom educator, specialist, or other instructional role.

Teacher leaders will need non-instructional time to conduct their teacher leader responsibilities but should still have a “foot in the classroom” with their core role as an educator. The Educator Work Group recommends that schools with teacher leaders use the following parameters to create release time and ensure teacher leaders keep a “foot in the classroom”:

- Teacher Leaders should retain a “foot in the classroom” through significant direct impact on student academic growth as normally conducted in their core role as a classroom educator, specialist, or other instructional role. At least 50% of the educator’s time should be spent in this core role.
- All teacher leaders should have at least 25% of the school day as “release time” to conduct their teacher leader responsibilities.
- The Instructional Practice Lead should be provided 25% additional release time—for a total of 50%—to coach, observe or otherwise support other educators during instructional periods.
- School administration and teacher leaders should discuss teacher leader responsibilities before the school year begins. If supporting other educators during instructional periods is part of the role, schools should provide the teacher leader additional release time, up to an additional 25% or a total of 50%.

Teacher Leader Selection Process

The EWG recommends the following principles around teacher leader selection:

- Selection needs to be transparent and fair.
- Selection should be consistent across schools and defined by the state.
- A basic set of skills and responsibilities should be defined for all roles.
- Roles should not have term limits, though a reapplication process will occur every three years.
- Endorsement from more than one stakeholder (educator peers, administrators, students, parents) should be considered to ensure meaningful input in the selection process.

The EWG recommends the following model selection process, modified from successful processes in other systems that have implemented teacher leadership:

1. Schools and LEAs decide which roles they want to offer.
2. A school-based selection committee develops the teacher leader application, criteria, and process for selection.

3. All educators who meet minimum requirements are encouraged to apply.
4. Interested educators complete application.
5. School-based selection committee assesses applications according to a common rubric created by the state.
6. Depending on the school and teacher leader role, the applicant would have different interview questions and/or additional selection activities.
7. Selection committee conducts interviews and other selection activities and assesses candidate readiness for the role.
8. Section committee makes final selection based on rubric, evidence from selection processes and additional data.

The selection committee would be composed of:

- A school administrator,
- Educator(s) selected by school administration,
- Educator(s) selected by the union (if applicable) equal to the number selected by school administration, and
- An LEA-level expert based on the role.

Teacher Leader Selection Criteria

All teachers who meet minimum requirements would be eligible to apply for teacher leader roles, with minimum requirements being:

- 5 years of experience as an educator,
- 2 years of experience as an educator in the LEA hiring for the role, and
- 2 years of 'Effective' or 'Highly Effective' ratings in components I, II, III and IV of DPAS II (or an LEA's equivalent measure).

Selection criteria should reflect what applicants should presently be able to do in their current roles, and not necessarily the skills that would be expected of them after they gain experience in the teacher leader role. The Educator Work Group recommends all teacher leaders should demonstrate or have a proven track record of the following during the teacher leader selection process:

- Interpersonal skills
- Organizational skills
- Communication skills
- Ability to work with teams and different stakeholders
- Ability to lead, inspire and earn respect of colleagues
- Ability to build consensus
- Willingness to go above and beyond
- Exhibit high professional standards

The school-based selection committees should look for strong impact on student growth when selecting teacher leaders, and LEAs should select the measure of student growth.¹ School selection committees should also consider evidence for role-specific criteria, developed based on the role descriptions in the section, "*Teacher Leader Desired Outcomes, Responsibilities, and Focus Areas.*"

¹Though these recommendations reflect the recommendation of most members, a few members of the Educator Work Group believed that teacher leaders should demonstrate 'Exceeds' ratings in student growth and 'Highly Effective' for other DPAS II components (or an LEA's equivalent) related to their roles.

Schools and LEAs should decide and communicate to applicants what evidence needs to be submitted with the application. Committees should consider a body of evidence to determine whether educators meet selection criteria for the role, and evidence should, at a minimum, include:

- A measure of student growth,
- Evidence of applicant's qualifications for the specific position, and
- An opportunity for the applicant to express their vision for the role.

While ratings on certain components of educator evaluations could be used as evidence for selection, whether and how to use this should be a school and LEA decision.

Role of Teacher Leaders in Educator Evaluation

The Educator Work Group recommends that observations from teacher leaders are not included or otherwise used in the evaluation of educators. Whenever possible, however, feedback provided to educators should be aligned with DPAS II or an alternative educator evaluation system so that educators can see how feedback is aligned to their professional growth. The Educator Work Group also recommends that any teacher leaders who will be conducting classroom observations are DPAS certified.

This recommendation should not be used to preclude charters or LEAs already allowing teachers to evaluate other teachers from continuing to do so. It also should not prevent charters or LEAs from creating policies or negotiated bargaining agreements allowing this practice in the future. However, state funding for teacher leaders should not be used to support this activity.

Compensation for Teacher Leaders

The Educator Work Group believes the proposed \$5,000 per year for being a teacher leader and \$6,000 per year for teacher leaders in high needs schools provide appropriate compensation for the roles. The Educator Work Group notes that teacher leaders and administrators will need to be thoughtful about how to introduce and structure the roles to ensure the school community finds these new positions valuable and deserving of this additional compensation.

The Educator Work Group also provided feedback on proposed compensation amounts for National Board Certification. The group believed that there should be equal value for National Board Certification, regardless of the need level of a school. The group recommended that the initial proposal of \$1500 annually and \$3000 for educators working in high needs schools be adjusted to \$2000 or \$2500 as a standard amount for National Board Certified educators in all schools.

Evaluation of Teacher Leader Performance

The Educator Work Group recommends that teacher leaders get evaluated annually in their teacher leader role and that the evaluation process be separate from the evaluation of their core educator responsibilities. Teacher leaders should be evaluated using a state-developed rubric that includes multiple focus areas for each teacher leader role (see recommended focus areas in the section, "*Teacher Leader Desired Outcomes, Responsibilities, and Focus Areas*") and demonstrates a progression of performance

within one focus area each year.² The EWG recommends the following design principles for teacher leader evaluation:

- *Evaluator:* Teacher leaders should be evaluated by their administrator.³
- *Timeline:* Teacher leaders should select a focus area with input from their administrator at the beginning of the school year, conduct a mid-year performance conversation with their administrator in the middle of the school year, and receive evaluation feedback at the end of the school year.
- *Performance expectations:* Performance expectations should be reflective of experience in role and encourage teacher leaders to grow toward a higher standard over time. Teacher leaders should be expected to show growth within their focus area on the teacher leader rubric each year.
- *Evidence:* Teacher leaders should be required to collect and present evidence of their growth, and evidence will vary depending on the role and focus area. Feedback from peers who are affected by teacher leaders should serve as one form of evidence considered for evaluation.

Duration of Teacher Leader Roles

The Educator Work Group recommends using a reapplication process to provide teacher leaders an opportunity to continue in a role but also provide other educators an opportunity to be considered. After a teacher leader is effective in a role for three years, the school would reopen the selection process for the position, and the teacher leader currently in the role could reapply. Evidence of past performance would be used as support during selection.

Continuing in the teacher leader role should depend on performance and meeting role expectations. Teacher leaders would be evaluated annually for performance in their educator and teacher leader roles and would have to meet standards in both to continue in the teacher leader role. The work group believes that teacher leaders will need at least one year to adjust to the new responsibilities of the roles. Those teachers who fail to show growth during the second year would be removed, and the role would be reopened.

The work group believes that the experience as a teacher leader will help educators make additional impact on their schools even after an educator is no longer in this position and, if a teacher leader is effective in the role, that some additional, permanent base salary increase should be provided to recognize this contribution, though not to the level of the teacher leader stipend.⁴

²The rubric aligned to the Teacher Leader Competencies developed jointly by the NEA, NBPTS, and the Center for Teaching Quality could serve as an exemplar.

³Some members of the Educator Work Group proposed that teacher leaders could be evaluated by a committee with similar composition to the selection committee.

⁴Some members of the EWG suggested that teacher leaders should not receive base salary increases after they are no longer in the role.

Support for Teacher Leaders

The Educator Work Group identified professional learning opportunities general to all roles and specific to individual roles. The group also created recommendations about how and when these professional learning opportunities could be delivered. The table below summarizes these ideas. Several central ideas emerged in the overall design of support for teacher leaders:

- Delaware has existing resources to help deliver professional learning opportunities. Teacher leaders, for example, could train other teacher leaders in topics related to their role. The summary below provides additional examples.
- Some training—such as establishing strong school relationships and FERPA training—should be provided upfront.
- Other training should be communicated as part of a broader plan with ongoing opportunities to engage the content.
- Teacher leaders will need access to conduct their roles. This includes but is not limited to access to administrator time, school data, and resources (e.g. copies).

Learning Opportunities for All Teacher Leader Roles		
Learning Opportunity	When Provided	Potential Providers
Using data tools	Ongoing with some summer discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEA and state experts • Digital Content Leads
FERPA training	Before first year in role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEA and state experts
Classroom observer credentialing	Early in first year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEA and state experts
Coaching, adult learning theory and peer-to-peer feedback	Focus before first year with ongoing support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEA and state experts
Role expectations and navigating school relationships	Before and during each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School administrator
Effective listening and communication	Ongoing with some summer discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School administrator • LEA and state experts
Cultural competency	Ongoing with some summer discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Culture Leads • Community Partnerships Leads
Differentiation of instruction	Ongoing with some summer discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEA and state experts • Instructional Practice Leads
Cohort collaboration	Ongoing with some summer discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohorts by school, LEA, or state-wide (depending on focus)

Teacher Leader Pilot Feedback

DDOE plans to launch an initial pilot for the 2016-2017 school year with a select cohort of representative schools. The EWG agreed that the pilot should observe the following design principles:

- Participating schools and LEAs need to have genuine interest in participating.

- A fair process for selecting teacher leaders must be in place.
- All schools should know about the opportunity to apply to participate in the pilot.
- The pilot school application should include an opportunity for schools to explain how teacher leaders will advance school goals and what their responsibilities will be.
- After being selected for the pilot, pilot schools will also create more detailed implementation plans describing how the roles will be used.
- The pilot should provide an accurate simulation of what full-scale implementation would look like at the school level, including the opportunity to have multiple teacher leaders per school.
- Pilot schools should represent all school levels (elementary, middle, and high) and all three DE counties, as well as high needs schools, alternative schools, and charter schools.
- The pilot should focus on the five model teacher leader roles developed by the EWG.
- Multiple model teacher leader roles, not just a subset of the five model roles, should be piloted in order to provide meaningful insights on how teacher leader roles can be successfully implemented across the state.
- Teacher leader roles should be open to all educators and not be limited to just classroom educators.

Teacher Leader Roles Desired Outcomes⁵, Responsibilities, and Focus Areas

Instructional Practice Lead

Desired Outcomes	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported educators receive more frequent, targeted feedback on development areas. • Supported educators are exposed to high-impact instructional strategies and use them more frequently. • Schools offer numerous targeted professional learning opportunities. • Improved educator evaluation ratings on DPAS II components including but not limited to component 1 (Planning and Preparation) and component 3 (Instruction). • Students of supported educators show measurable improvement in their academic performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model effective teaching methods, independent of content area, by providing opportunities for other educators to observe lessons. • Observe a variety of educators and provide them with constructive, non-evaluative feedback. • Conduct co-planning and co-teaching sessions with educators based on their professional learning needs. • Attend regularly scheduled meetings with campus administration to ensure consistent coordination and communication. • Regularly collaborate with other educators and educator support roles in the school to align educator development resources. • Mediate educator relationships and ensure effective collaboration for instructional and student support.
Teacher Leader Evaluation Focus Areas	Role-Specific Professional Learning Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection • Collaboration • Instructional practice and strategies, • Feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about current LEA or state “best practices” or initiatives • Strategies to support a wide range of subjects and grades • Helping educators set instructional goals.

⁵ Desired outcomes are not meant to be criteria on which teacher leaders are officially evaluated.

Digital Content Lead

Desired Outcomes	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More students have access to instructional technology tools and digital content. • More opportunities for educators to participate in professional learning sessions focused on new instructional technology and digital content. • Supported educators build knowledge of instructional technology and digital content. • Improved student outcomes in classrooms of supported educators. • Improved student work samples from classrooms that incorporate new, effective technology. • Improved educator evaluation ratings on DPAS II criteria including but not limited to 1b (Designing Coherent Instruction) and 3a (Engaging Students in Learning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use digital content and technology with their own students and serve as a model classroom in order to model best practices. • Research new techniques for integrating digital content and technology in the classroom. • Regularly host professional learning sessions and labs to help educators integrate digital content and technology into everyday instruction. • Connect educators to external technology resources and professional learning. • Coordinate with the school's administrative team to determine the school's instructional technology needs. • Support work to bring needed digital and technological tools to the school.
Teacher Leader Evaluation Focus Areas	Role-Specific Professional Learning Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection • Collaboration • Research • Data Use • Technology Coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about available state and LEA instructional technology and digital content • Training in technology and data tools as needed

Instructional Strategy Lead

Desired Outcomes	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School offers more professional learning opportunities introducing instructional strategies to educators. • Educators receive targeted resources around research and development in instructional strategies tailored to educator and school needs and feel empowered to apply these strategies in their classrooms. • Educators receive higher evaluation ratings on DPAS II components including but not limited to component 1 (Planning and Preparation) and component 3 (Instruction). • Students show measurable improvement in their academic performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the school leadership team to identify areas of need for the school and align on priorities for research. • Conduct ongoing research on instructional strategy and classroom best practices. • Provide information and resources on findings to other interested educators. • Lead initiatives at school to implement promising strategies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Helping secure necessary resources – Supporting recruitment of staff to support implementation – Developing metrics for success – Providing ongoing support for educators implementing new strategies in their classrooms – Track and report impact of initiatives
Teacher Leader Evaluation Focus Areas	Role-Specific Professional Learning Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection • Collaboration • Research • Project Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research strategies • Diagnosing school needs • Project management

Community Partnerships Lead

Desired Outcomes	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have access to more resources and opportunities as a result of increased public-private partnerships and grant funding. • Educators receive more training and support regarding effective student interventions and supporting students' mental and physical health challenges. • At-risk students see improved academic outcomes. • Improved educator evaluation ratings on DPAS II criteria including but not limited to 4a. • Improved student attendance. • Expulsions and suspensions decrease. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify school needs with other educators and school administrators. • Research local community partners who may be able to offer additional resources and supports around critical student needs, particularly around nutrition, counseling, and other wraparound services. • Secure agreements with relevant community partners for additional resources and/or support. • Oversee systems to match students and educators with community resources. • Ensure resources and community partnerships are used in a way that aligns with the school's processes for providing students additional support. • Ensure that resources and community partnerships are used as intended and assess program impact.
Teacher Leader Evaluation Focus Areas	Role-Specific Professional Learning Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection • Collaboration • Physical and Mental Health of Students • Stakeholder Relations • Interpersonal Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about what is legally provided or otherwise available in Delaware for students in crisis • Training in how to identify students in crisis • Information about exemplar community partnership models in Delaware and around the country • Effective collaboration techniques with community partners

Desired Outcomes	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators are implementing strategies to improve classroom culture. • There is regularly facilitated professional learning related to classroom management & culture and culturally responsive teaching. • Increased number of observations regarding classroom management and learning environment. • More frequent coaching of teachers based on classroom management gaps. • Reduction in student discipline incidents in the classrooms of educators being coached. • Improved attendance rates for students in the classrooms of educators being coached. • Higher student engagement in the classrooms of educators being coached according to teacher and school leader observation data. • Educators receive higher evaluation ratings on DPAS II components including but not limited component 2 (Classroom Environment) and criterion 1d. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide conversation in school community to create a philosophy about discipline, culture, and culturally responsive teaching. • Model classroom management strategies to improve classroom culture and responsive teaching. • Share information and resources with the rest of the school staff through professional learning trainings, strategy handbooks, handouts, etc. • Develop, establish and help reinforce school-wide protocols and strategies around school culture and student discipline. • Observe educators' classroom practice to diagnose gaps and provide constructive, non-evaluative feedback around classroom management and student discipline. • Work with educators to problem-solve specific classroom management and classroom culture challenges. • Mediate educator relationships and ensure effective collaboration for instructional and student support.
Teacher Leader Evaluation Focus Areas	Role-Specific Professional Learning Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection • Collaboration • Philosophy around Culture and Discipline • Culturally Responsive Teaching • Student Engagement • Accessibility for All 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in culturally responsive teaching • Current research in classroom management and environment • Training in school-wide culture building