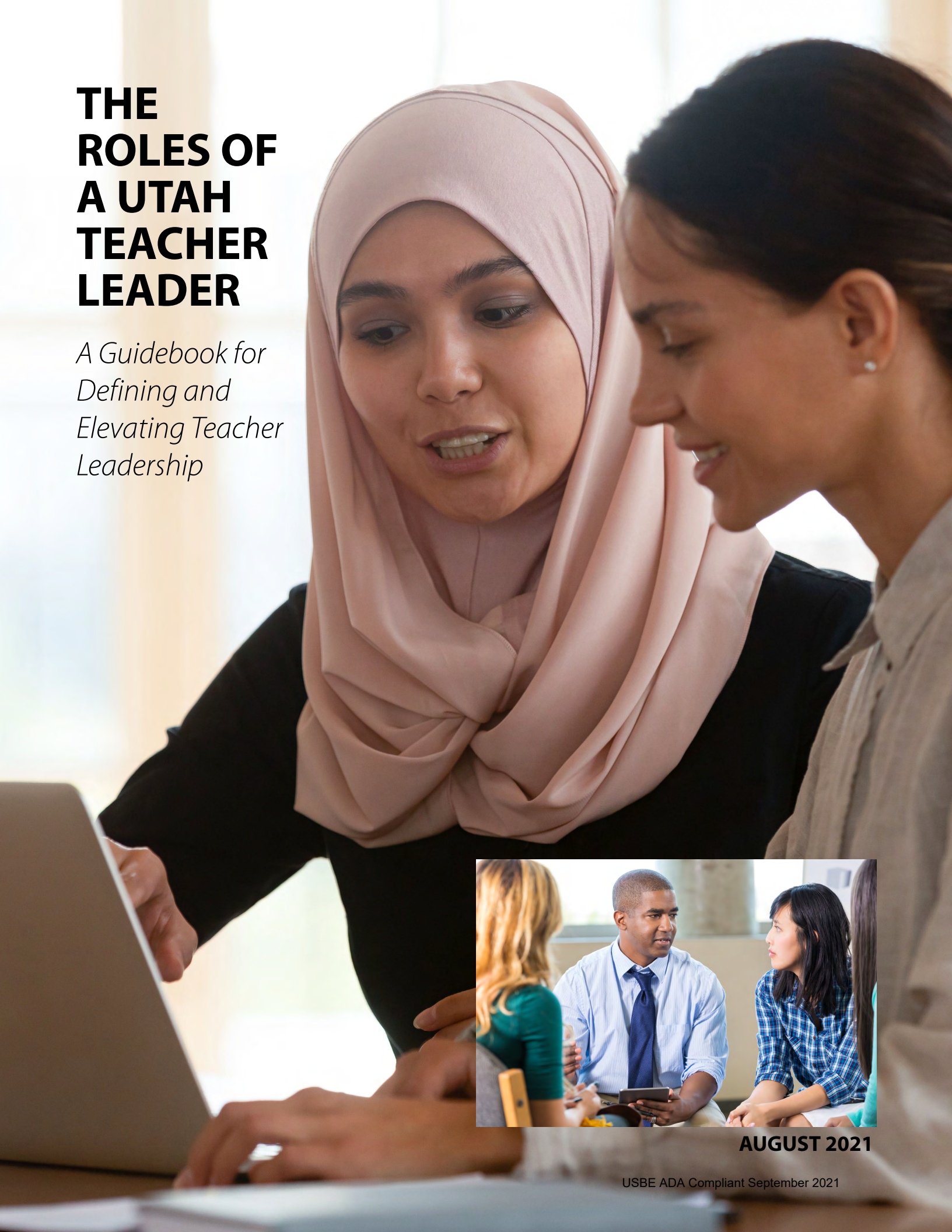# THE ROLES OF A UTAH TEACHER LEADER

A Guidebook for Defining and Elevating Teacher Leadership

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The Roles of a Utah Teacher Leader

A Guidebook for Defining and Elevating Teacher Leadership

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WHAT IS TEACHER LEADERSHIP?

Teacher leadership has been broadly described as a role in which a teacher uses best practices to influence colleagues, administrators, and policy makers to improve teaching and learning (Allen, Eckert, & Holland, 2014). Teacher leadership can also be viewed as a strategy utilized in education systems to address key teaching and learning challenges or to promote sustainable, long-term school improvement. "Teacher leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders; influence others toward improved educational practice; and accept responsibility for achieving the outcomes of their leadership" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 6).

Teachers exhibit leadership in multiple, sometimes overlapping, ways. Some leadership roles are formal with designated responsibilities. Other informal teacher leadership roles may also emerge as teachers interact with their peers. A key element of any teacher leader role, however, is that the teacher leader takes on formal leadership responsibilities *while remaining a classroom teacher.*

This guide was created as a resource to define and describe six teacher leader roles as outlined in Utah Administrative Rule R277-513 and to provide research-based recommendations for developing and initiating teacher leader initiatives that will help schools and districts meet the demands of their local contexts. Teacher leadership roles should be designed to capitalize on the specific strengths and skills of exemplary educators while meeting the instructional and learning goals of an individual school or district. These roles are ideally filled by educators who wish to lead their colleagues while remaining in the classroom setting. Teacher leaders are most successful when formally recognized, supported, and celebrated by administrators and local school boards. As administrators identify potential teacher leaders in their schools, they should consider possibilities that allow those educators to contribute ideas and ultimately impact teaching and learning in meaningful ways. Regardless of the specific roles they assume, teacher leaders grow professionally while shaping the culture of their schools, influencing instructional practice, and improving student learning.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

It is likely that all teachers have at some time or another referred to themselves as being "just a teacher" (e.g., "I Am Just a Teacher"). Use of this pervasive term has been fed by low teacher salaries and fluctuating levels of public respect for the teaching profession. Despite earning advanced degrees, obtaining a professional license, and con-sistently demonstrating effective practices, many teachers are led to believe that in order to grow as a professional and have a positive impact on the profession, they must leave the classroom.

Few hybrid positions exist that offer educators leadership opportunities while remain-ing classroom teachers. Educators seeking leadership roles must often choose between working with classrooms of students and pursuing new challenges in leadership. Thus, many of Utah's most effective educators must make the difficult decision to leave the classroom.

According to the Learning Policy Institute research report Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators,

> "Many professions have institutionalized career ladders and upward trajecto-ries that allow their high performers to count on increased responsibility, sal-ary, and status. In contrast, teaching is a relatively 'flat' profession in which the typical way to move up is to enter school administration— a role that many excellent teachers may not be interested in pursuing. The leadership positions that do exist in schools, such as mentor, coach, or department chair, are gener-ally limited and often not associated with a commensurate increase in salary" (p. 17).

Further, a 2018 Gallup report states,

> "By a large margin, the primary reason teachers gave for leaving their last job was career advancement or development, with 60% of teachers who left vol-untarily citing reasons related to this category. This percentage shows that many teachers might not have felt challenged in their work or received in-dividualized opportunities to grow and advance, so they left their job. Even though many districts invest heavily in professional development programs, these opportunities might not be individualized to teachers' specific growth and development needs."

Developing and supporting teacher leadership opportunities in schools and districts provides a needed alternative - an avenue for effective teachers to maintain a classroom presence while taking on and being compensated for serving in formal leadership roles. While teacher leadership opportunities allow teachers to advocate for and contribute to development of sound educational practices within and beyond the classroom, they also provide other significant benefits.

BENEFITS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

The primary advantage of teacher leadership roles is that the most effective teachers have the opportunity to impact student learning while gaining leadership skills. However, the benefits of teacher leadership are not limited to the teacher leaders themselves as outlined below:

Teacher leaders:
- Develop coaching, mentoring, and reflective questioning skills.
- Develop policy advocacy and leadership skills through practical experience.
- Develop professional learning design and delivery skills.
- Share expertise with and guide the reflective practices of colleagues.
- Increase their own pedagogical effectiveness toward becoming a model of best practice.
- Inspire future teacher leaders.
- Experience greater job satisfaction and motivation.

When working with teacher leaders, other teachers:
- Have the opportunity to learn from in-house talent.
- Have the opportunity to glean from the experience and wisdom of colleagues.
- Have the opportunity to develop relationships with influential teachers.
- Are more motivated to refine practice and develop their own leadership potential.

Teacher leadership can be neither effective nor successful without authentic principal support. School leaders can maximize their own effectiveness by nurturing the talents and expertise of teachers through teacher leadership roles (Educational Testing Service, 2008; Wells, Maxfield, Klocko, & Feun, 2010). This reciprocal relationship benefits school administrators in the following ways:

- Provides a way for school leaders to recognize in-house talent.
- Provides incentives that support retention of high-quality teachers.
- Provides a broader leadership network in the building, creating enhanced capacity.
- Supports the development of innovative teaching practices, improved student learning outcomes, and a collective accountability for student success.

Even students greatly benefit from teacher leadership that encourages talented and passionate educators to remain in the classroom while engaging in leadership activities. Teacher leadership opportunities benefit students in the following ways:

- Improved teacher job satisfaction creates more optimism around teaching leading to a positive classroom climate.
- Teachers demonstrate persistence in finding successful instructional strategies.
- Teachers feel deep responsibility for student success.
- Effective teachers remain in the classroom and are better equipped to support student learning.

By developing and supporting teacher leadership programs, schools and districts help provide encouragement and incentive for effective teachers to grow professionally while staying in the classroom. This allows the most effective teachers to continue to contribute to student learning and growth while leading out to help build a solid school community.

SIX TEACHER LEADER ROLES

This document outlines the teacher leadership roles schools and districts can rely upon to reap the benefits associated with keeping excellent teachers in the classroom while leveraging the leadership skills of their faculty. When considered broadly, teacher leaders generally fall into one of six roles:

1—**Professional Learning Lead**

2—**Formally Trained and Recognized Mentor**

3—**Lead or Master Teacher**

4—**Education Policy Advocate**

5—**School Outreach Lead**

6—**Education Ambassador**

Each description of one of these roles provides areas of impact and the levels of influence the role may encompass. Information is also provided regarding how administrators can support the role within their buildings and what knowledge, skills and dispositions are essential for educators serving in each role to demonstrate. A sample profile of Utah teachers serving in each teacher leader role is also included in Appendix A.

The ideas and examples offered here are provided for illustrative purposes and should spark local school and district conversations regarding how to better leverage the leadership capacity of classroom teachers. These roles and guidelines *are not considered prescriptive* and do not represent an exhaustive list of all the ways school leaders may effectively involve educators in teacher leadership. In many cases, teacher leaders may demonstrate their mastery of the skills highlighted in each role by earning USBE Microcredentials that align to those competencies.

1 —PROFESSIONAL LEARNING LEAD

DESCRIPTION

When functioning as a **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING LEAD**, the teacher leader understands the evolving nature of teaching and learning, established and emerging technologies, and the social and emotional needs of both teachers and students. In this role, the teacher leader uses his knowledge to promote, design, and facilitate professional learning aligned with school im-provement goals.

A professional learning lead, in conjunction with school or district administration, provides for-mal professional learning to educators in their school, district, or state. While these professional learning opportunities may involve designing and facilitating learning with large groups of teachers, administrators, or other staff, a professional learning lead may also engage with small-er groups or individual teachers in professional growth aimed at meeting more individualized outcomes. In particular, a professional learning lead may provide job-embedded professional learning support such as classroom observation, co-teaching, or providing feedback to support the professional growth of themselves and other teachers.

Having teacher leaders facilitate professional learning helps schools, districts and states stream-line spending while building internal capacity over time. When teachers learn with and from one another, they can focus on what most directly improves student learning. Their profes-sional learning becomes more relevant, focused on teachers' classroom work, and aligned to fill gaps in student learning. Such communities of learning can build teacher collective efficacy and break norms of isolation.

Potential Focus or Impact	Targeted Level of Influence	Support Needed From Administration	Role Examples
• Engagement strate-gies • Instructional im-provement • Personalized learning • Remote learning strategies • Social emotional learning • Use of digital tools	• District • School	• Accommodate atten-dance at professional learning sessions • Accommodate time to follow up with teachers after train-ing • Schedule and protect professional learning times • Secure funding for the position	• Leading EDGEucator • Presenter at district, state, or national conferences • Professional Learning Facilitator

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS

- Applies adult learning theories
- Builds relationships
- Facilitates dialogue and discussion
- Creates and provides effective feedback
- Fosters an equitable learning environment
- Listens intentionally
- Teaches, develops, and uses norms of collaboration and collegial inquiry
- Understands and implements social emotional learning strategies
- Understands and implements Utah's Professional Learning Standards
- Uses protocols or other strategies

ALIGNMENT TO UTAH'S EFFECTIVE TEACHING STANDARDS

Standard 9: Leadership & Collaboration

The teacher is a leader who engages collaboratively with learners, families, colleagues, and community members to build a shared vision and supportive professional culture focused on student growth and success.

Highly Effective Practice

Engages in professional learning to enhance knowledge and skill, to contribute to the knowledge and skill of others, and to work collaboratively to advance professional practice.

Profile of Current Professional Learning Lead

2—FORMALLY TRAINED AND RECOGNIZED MENTOR

When functioning as a **FORMALLY TRAINED AND RECOGNIZED MENTOR**, the teacher leader models best practices, co-plans, co-teaches, and guides the reflection of university practicum students, student teachers, or early career teachers.

When working with university practicum students and student teachers, this role differs from periodic administrative requests for a practicum student observation or cooperating teacher experience. This formal mentoring role would include district or university sponsored training and continue beyond a single semester. When working with early career teachers, this role would involve providing support for more than one academic school year.

A formal mentor is specifically chosen by school or district administration as an effective, experienced teacher with excellent communication skills and a growth mindset. The formal mentor engages as a learner in targeted professional learning rooted in best mentoring practices. Such professional learning might include gaining clarity around the mentoring role, understanding early-career teachers' perspectives and experiences, collaborative coaching and co-teaching strategies, modeling metacognitive processes, or developing and refining effective communication skills.

The formal mentoring role sets the teacher leader apart as a model teacher who deliberately engages teacher candidates or novice teachers in planning, instructional decision making, and targeted reflective practice. These job-embedded mentoring experiences require flexibility in scheduling and accommodation by school administrators.

Formal mentoring takes a great deal of time and expertise. Beyond the obvious support of early-career teachers and their instructional skills, teacher leaders in the formal mentoring role make a significant contribution to district recruiting efforts and the retention of new teachers.

Potential Focus or Impact	Targeted Level of Influence	Support Needed From Administration	Role Examples
• Developing teacher self-efficacy • Engagement strategies • Instructional improvement • Professional socialization • Reflective practice • Professionalism	• District • School • Teacher candidates • University and district partnership	• Accommodate professional learning opportunities for mentors • Accommodate classroom observations and reflective conversations with possible prep block • Create dedicated time for mentoring activities • Provide financial or course load incentives for mentors • Select effective teachers as mentors	• Assigned teacher mentor for beginning teachers with less than three years' of experience • Assigned district mentor for beginning teachers with less than three years' of experience • Cooperating teacher for university practicum students or student teachers

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & DISPOSITIONS

See USBE Mentor Roles and Competencies

ALIGNMENT TO UTAH'S EFFECTIVE TEACHING STANDARDS

Standard 9: Leadership & Collaboration

The teacher is a leader who engages collaboratively with learners, families, colleagues, and community members to build a shared vision and supportive professional culture focused on student growth and success.

Highly Effective Practice

Participates in professional dialogue, peer observation and feedback, peer coaching, and other collegial learning activities.

Profile of Current Formally Trained and Recognized Mentor

3— **LEAD OR MASTER TEACHER**

When functioning as a **LEAD OR MASTER TEACHER**, the teacher leader organizes and leads a team of teachers of the same grade level, content area, or professional learning needs. These teams may focus on utilizing curricular resources, lesson planning, student data analysis, formative assessment development, or other instructional improvement efforts or decision making activities as directed by their school administrators. The lead or master teacher would schedule, structure, and lead team meetings.

Master teachers are specifically chosen by their administrators as effective teachers with strong communication, organization, and leadership skills. This is a formal role and may be combined with other teacher leader responsibilities, such as peer observation or mentoring. Teacher leaders in this role are expected to engage and build capacity for strong professional learning communities within their teams.

In the master teacher role, teacher leaders are not accountable for the outcomes of the teachers they lead and should not be considered as evaluators of their colleagues' performance. Administrators may, however, hold these teacher leaders responsible for the results of collaborative time (e.g., data analysis results, instructional plans based on student learning evidence) to ensure that team time is productive.

Potential Focus or Impact	Targeted Level of Influence	Support Needed From Administration	Role Examples
• Engagement strategies • Instructional improvement • Remote learning strategies • Standards-based learning • Using digital tools	• School grade level or department • School instructional focus • School program implementation	• Select effective teachers as Master Teachers • Protect team meeting times in the school schedule • Provide feedback to guide teacher leader's PLC planning	• Department Chair • Grade-level Lead • Leading EDGEducator • School Canvas Lead

- Consistently utilizes effective communication skills
- Demonstrates intentional listening
- Engages in positive relationship building
- Facilitates impactful dialogue and discussion with stakeholders
- Develops and supports use of norms for collaboration and collegial inquiry
- Leads collective efficacy efforts within their PLC
- Models the implementation of the Utah Effective Teaching Standards
- Possesses and demonstrates strong organizational skills

ALIGNMENT TO UTAH'S EFFECTIVE TEACHING STANDARDS

Standard 9: Leadership and Collaboration

The teacher is a leader who engages collaboratively with learners, families, colleagues, and community members to build a shared vision and supportive professional culture focused on student growth and success.

Highly Effective Practice

- Takes initiative to participate in developing and implementing policies and practices that improve instruction.

- Assumes a leadership role within his or her area of assignment that includes a shared responsibility for student work, examinations of problems of practice, and the identification of improvement strategies.

Profile of Current Lead or Master Teacher

4— EDUCATION POLICY ADVOCATE

When functioning as an **EDUCATION POLICY ADVOCATE**, the teacher leader understands how educational policy is created and the role of school leaders, boards of education, legislators, and other stakeholders in formulating those policies. With this understanding, the teacher leader actively participates in attending and contacting policy stakeholders at the local, state, and national level. The teacher leader advocates for student needs and for practices that support effective teaching and increase student learning outcomes while appreciating that advocacy work is done on a personal level, rather than in the capacity of making legally binding contracts that would impact local districts or state funding.

The education policy advocate strives to positively inform decisions made by education policymakers by providing feedback that represents the diverse opinions of educators throughout the state. She seeks to understand and share how effective policies may impact school and classroom realities. The work of an education policy advocate may include impacting district policies and procedures, USBE rules and supports, legislative policies, and elevating the profession through positive media exposure.

The education policy advocate is expected to effectively share information with colleagues within and/or beyond the district regarding how local, state, and national trends and policies can impact classroom practices and expectations for student learning. As the education policy advocate teacher leader attends public meetings for local and state school boards, reads current educational literature, and shares personal classroom experiences, she becomes a trusted source of unbiased information on education policy. These teacher leaders then engage and encourage their colleagues to learn more about and share their own stories related to policy decisions.

Potential Focus or Impact	Targeted Level of Influence	Support Needed From Administration	Role Examples
• District policies and procedures • Elevating the profession through positive media exposure • Legislative policies • USBE rules and supports	• District level • Legislative level • Local school board level • National level • State level • State school board	• Accommodate attendance at professional learning sessions and or policy events • Assign teacher leaders to help with media messaging and legal issues • Provide access to substitutes or additional financial incentives for time outside of classrooms	• Teacher asked to speak in committee meetings • Teacher inviting representatives to visit school/classroom • Utah Education Association (UEA) Policy Ambassador • Utah Teacher Fellow • Utah Teacher of the Year

- Assume positive intentions when working with a variety of stakeholders
- Build relationships and increase networks of educational professionals
- Communicate effectively using diverse platforms (e.g., email, phone, social media, written publications, media interviews, in-person meetings)
- Identify decision makers
- Invite and honor diverse views
- Lead data-driven dialogue and discussion
- Participate in leadership trainings
- Understand power structures and decision making in context
- Value professional expertise
- Work effectively within political systems
- Work with a solutions-oriented mindset

ALIGNMENT TO UTAH'S EFFECTIVE TEACHING STANDARDS

Standard 9: Leadership & Collaboration

The teacher is a leader who engages collaboratively with learners, families, colleagues, and community members to build a shared vision and supportive professional culture focused on student growth and success.

Highly Effective Practice

- Advocates for the learners, the school, the community, and the profession
- Actively participates, promotes, and provides support for initiatives in the school and community to have an impact on student success.
- Regularly communicates with educational stakeholders through powerful pieces of writing

Profile of Current Education Policy Advocate

5 — SCHOOL OUTREACH LEAD

DESCRIPTION

When functioning as a **SCHOOL OUTREACH LEAD**, the teacher leader applies the vision of the school and needs of the community to a school-based improvement project. Within this role, the teacher leader aligns his or her professional goals with those of the school and district and shares responsibility for the success of the school as a whole. A focus on collective accountability drives the school outreach lead to design and carry out innovative projects that support school initiatives.

With administrative approval, the school outreach lead initiates new projects that strive to enrich the school and connect with the community. Well beyond committee work, the school outreach lead organizes and delegates tasks for in-person or digital events that carry out the school goals. Event preparation may include leading school committees that include teachers, parents, and community members. Effective school outreach leads understand local cultures and community values and use this understanding to design events and supports that will have a significant impact on student learning and family engagement.

Potential Focus or Impact	Targeted Level of Influence	Support Needed From Administration	Role Examples
• Community outreach • Family outreach • Student engagement initiatives	• Community • Grant-funded programs • School • School LAND Trust Plan	• Accommodate attendance at school, district, or community meetings • Provide access to building resources and online platforms	• Digital educational seminar designer • Educators Rising teacher/advisor • Latinos in Action teacher/advisor • School-community needs task force member • School-community event organizer • School food bank coordinator • School improvement team member

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS

- Communication skills
- Cultural responsivity
- Data gathering and analysis
- Digital skills
- Facilitates dialogue and discussion
- Relationship building
- Intentional listening
- Organizational skills
- Teaching, developing, and using norms of collaboration and collegial inquiry
- Understands equitable education
- Using protocols or other strategies

ALIGNMENT TO UTAH'S EFFECTIVE TEACHING STANDARDS

Standard 9: Leadership & Collaboration

The teacher is a leader who engages collaboratively with learners, families, colleagues, and community members to build a shared vision and supportive professional culture focused on student growth and success.

Highly Effective Practice

- Actively participates, promotes, and provides support for initiatives in the school and community to have an impact on student success
- Collaborates with colleagues on school improvement issues

Profile of Current School Outreach Lead

6— EDUCATION AMBASSADOR

DESCRIPTION

When functioning as an **EDUCATION AMBASSADOR**, the teacher leader leverages the expertise of a wide network of educators and community members in the creation, dissemination, and evaluation of innovative programs and best practices. The teacher leader represents educator and student voice in collaborating with stakeholders at the local, state, and national levels. The Education Ambassador knows the value of teacher voice in advocacy and serves as a spokesperson for their network of educators. They improve educational outcomes by sharing what they have learned from their own professional growth and experiences; in turn, organizations acquire skills and knowledge from these practitioners.

Many times, Education Ambassadors collaborate with partner organizations by participating in fellowships, task forces, committees, and advisory boards. These teacher leaders share knowledge both formally and informally through education networks, media outlets, cohorts, etc. Education Ambassadors can promote teacher-led conversations in their networks that further the profession and improve classroom instruction for all Utah students

Potential Focus or Impact	Targeted Level of Influence	Support Needed From Administration	Role Examples
• Act as a voice for networks of educators in the creation, dissemination, and evaluation of innovative programs and best practices.	• District • National • Region • State	• Elevate the voices of outstanding teachers • Support these educators in their outreach efforts	• Content/Standards Writing Committees • District or state task forces or advisory councils • Local, state, and national associations • Partner with organizations (e.g., National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, National Council for Teachers Mathematics) • Partner with universities (e.g., adjunct faculty, advisory boards) • Presentations at conferences • Utah State Teacher of the Year • Utah Hope Street Teacher Fellow • U.S. Dept of Education Teacher Ambassador

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS

- Communicate effectively on social media platforms
- Confidence in public speaking
- Craft and deliver an effective message
- Demonstrate that teacher learning is interwoven with student learning
- Education-targeted networking
- Lead data driven dialogue
- Sophisticated, thoughtful writing on published platforms
- Synthesize and summarize feedback from large groups

ALIGNMENT TO UTAH'S EFFECTIVE TEACHING STANDARDS

Standard 9: Leadership & Collaboration

The teacher is a leader who engages collaboratively with learners, families, colleagues, and community members to build a shared vision and supportive professional culture focused on student growth and success.

HIghly Effective Practice

- Actively communicates the vision of college and career readiness to students.
- Actively participates, promotes, and provides support for initiatives in the school and community to have an impact on student success.
- Advocates for the learners, the school, the community, and the profession.

Profile of a Current Education Ambassador

WHAT ABOUT INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES?

Having a clearly articulated vision of the kinds of roles that qualify as teacher leader roles is a critical step in state efforts to recruit and retain effective teachers and inspire excellence in teaching. Teacher leader roles are focused on elevating the profession and offering classroom teachers a recognized, compensated position where they can lead *from their classrooms*.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES (e.g., literacy coaches, math coaches, technology coaches) are often treated as a 100% specialist assignment at the school or district level. As a specialist, instructional coaches often have no classroom teaching responsibilities and are no longer assigned to courses in CACTUS. Instructional coaches are specialists who work with adult learners. While they sometimes co-teach or model classroom lessons, their primary work has taken them away from having a direct influence on classrooms of students. Because the definition of a teacher leader specifies that teacher leaders are classroom teachers who have additional leadership roles, instructional coaches are typically not considered teacher leaders.

In smaller schools or districts, instructional coaches may retain classroom teaching responsibilities and are given coaching responsibilities in addition to their regular instructional role. In these cases, the teacher would be considered a teacher leader because their coaching responsibilities have not removed them from classroom teaching. Thus, in some cases, an instructional coach may be considered a teacher leader.

Caution should be exercised when determining whether to designate an instructional coach as a teacher leader. If the role of teacher leader is defined too broadly, it loses its distinction. Simply suggesting, for example, that a teacher leader is anyone who "leads other teachers" creates no distinction that sets teacher leaders apart for having and being able to contribute a unique set of skills to the educational community they serve. Consequently, school and district leaders should rely on educators' assignments as listed in CACTUS to resolve confusion related to whether their role should be considered a teacher leader. In any case, the guiding principle should be that the teacher leader takes on formal leadership responsibilities while remaining a classroom teacher.

You can find additional information on teacher eligibility for teacher leader roles in Appendix B.

Recommendations for Implementing Teacher Leader Initiatives

There is no one-size-fits-all pathway to implementing teacher leader programs and initiatives. The unique circumstances and contexts facing each district/school necessitate approaching implementation of teacher leader programs in ways that effectively meet local needs while efficiently using local resources. Despite these differences, implementing a successful Teacher Leader program requires coordination, cooperation, and support among stakeholders in district/charter leadership and school administration as well as from the teachers themselves.

This section provides suggestions to support successful implementation of teacher leader initiatives. **These recommendations are not prescriptive.** However, consideration of these recommendations during implementation efforts can help build a cohesive structure that conveys the importance of teacher leaders within your school/district. The suggestions are presented as "steps" in an effort to guide LEAs through developing teacher leader initiatives from start to finish (see also Appendix A: Implementation profiles for ideas of how others are currently using teacher leaders).

1. **School/district needs assessment.** An LEA should assess the needs of their school/district and specifically describe what those needs are. Why and for what purpose are teacher leaders needed. For example, one school may want to better integrate with the surrounding community in order to more effectively serve their students. Another school may need support when working to implement USBE Rules or may desire to be part of discussions on policies that uniquely affect their teachers. A school district may find that the costs of outside professional development companies are too high, and instead it would be a more effective use of school monies to develop and deliver in-house professional development. In each case a teacher leader could assist in addressing identified needs.

2. **Select or create a teacher leader role to address identified need(s).** After reviewing the roles described in this document, schools/districts identify, or adapt roles to meet the needs that have been identified. It is not necessary for schools/districts to use all of the teacher leader roles identified in this document. Instead school/district leaders should design roles they feel are best suited to meet their needs.

3. **Identify ways to compensate teacher leader(s) for their service.** Before selecting teacher leaders, schools and districts should assess how they can provide incentive for teachers to serve as teacher leaders. Examining potential funding sources to provide stipends, professional learning, substitutes, or other compensation is an essential step in valuing teacher leadership. In many cases, schools and districts already have funding sources that may be effectively used to financially incentivize teacher leaders. However, teachers can also be compensated with period buy-outs, relicensure credit, and tuition reimbursements or payment of microcredential fees. Examples of funding sources for teacher leader initiatives include:

- Teacher and Student Success Act (TSSA)
- Title II, Part A
- K–3 Early Learning Program
- Digital Teaching and Learning Grants
- School LAND Trust
- Coordinated school board or legislative requests for funding

4. **Recruit and select teachers to fill teacher leader positions.** Having identified applicable teacher roles, draft formal applications or recruit influential teachers to apply for the available positions. Include in the application a description of the role and the tasks to be accomplished. Identify desired competencies for the role and available incentives. Making the opportunity to be a teacher leader available to all interested teachers and having a formal application process allows teachers to self-identify as wanting to take on additional responsibilities (see Teacher Eligibility per Utah Code in Appendix B). Review all applications received, if necessary hold interviews or create a selection panel to facilitate a final and equitable decision. While this may seem like a formal process, the formality signals administrative support for and the overall importance of the role.

RECOGNIZING AND ELEVATING THE WORK OF TEACHER LEADERS

Administrators who are deliberate in their efforts to recognize the work of teacher leaders attract prospective teacher leaders and strengthen the resolve and efforts of existing teacher leaders. To help elevate the work of teacher leaders, administration can encourage teacher leaders to add advanced titles and formal teacher leader roles to their email signature lines. Teacher successes and leadership efforts can also be promoted on school websites, in school and district newsletters, at recruiting events, and through local school board recognitions. School and district social media platforms are a great place to elevate and celebrate the accomplishments of teachers (see Davis District's use of the #TeachinDavis and Canyon School District's use of the #WeAreCanyons hashtag to highlight teacher success). In addition, schools and districts can grant relicensure hours for teacher leadership role experiences and invite teacher leaders to present their work at district and state conferences or highlight the Teacher Leader Microcredentials earned by their teachers.

Instructional coaches and specialists who are not eligible to be called teacher leaders often go above and beyond and engage in leadership work. Recognizing these specialists for their outstanding work should also be common practice in schools and districts. This recognition may differ, or be similar to that offered for teacher leaders.

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Teacher Leader Profiles

1—PROFESSIONAL LEARNING LEAD

Profile of: *Kristin van Brunt, Viewmont High School, Davis School District*

What was the need? Administrators want to provide opportunities to educators to grow as professionals without taking excessive time out of the classroom. The professional learning lead position allows for an in-house educator to provide bite-sized opportunities for teachers to learn without missing class time. Educators can earn relicensure hours through completion of brief missions.

What role does this teacher leader fill? Kristin teaches half day and acts as a professional learning lead for half the day.

How does the teacher fulfill this role? Kristin attends digital learning/teaching conferences in a train-the-trainer capacity. She collects resources for professional development and runs professional learning about technology in the classroom. Thirty-minute sessions are offered for topics such as SEL, PCBL, Canvas. Teachers are offered a new 30-minute session every two weeks.

How is the teacher's time funded? Kristin's time as a professional learning lead is funded half from TSSA funds and half from Trustlands funds. Kristin and her principal prepared a proposal for the School Community Council who then voted to approve using Trustlands funds for this purpose.

2—**FORMALLY TRAINED AND RECOGNIZED MENTOR**

Profile of: **Mentor Teacher Leaders, Davis School District**

What was the need? Year one elementary teachers often feel isolated as they learn to navigate their first year of teaching. Davis District designed K–6 Elementary Support Group sessions for Year 1 teachers to reflect on their experiences with other new teachers on their grade level. This personalized mentoring experience provided a powerful professional learning community for Year 1 teachers while also creating teacher leader positions.

What role does this teacher leader fill? A Mentor Teacher Leader for each K-6 elementary grade level.

How does the teacher fulfill this role? The Mentor Teacher Leaders plan and facilitate each support group session. Mentor Teacher Leaders are effective teachers recommended by administrators. They are formally trained in mentoring strategies, phases of Year 1 teachers, and professional learning practices. In addition to hosting the support group sessions, the Mentor Teacher Leaders also meet three times yearly as a mentoring team to reflect and collaborate on session ideas.

How is the teacher's time funded? Mentor Teacher Leaders are paid an annual stipend in May. This is funded by the Elementary Induction Program within the Professional Learning & Quality Staffing Department.

3—LEAD OR MASTER TEACHER

Profile of: **Weber School District Curriculum Fellows**

What was the need? In Weber School District the district's Curriculum and Assessment Department consists of a team of five. It was an immense challenge to provide adequate resources and support to all the educators in the district to ensure high quality instruction in every classroom. Through innovative thinking and intentional design, Weber leveraged the largest number of employees in their system, their teachers, to provide the resources, culture, and structures needed for the entire system to thrive. By leveraging their teacher leaders, who are still in classrooms providing day-to-day leadership and support for their peers, the district has been able to ensure impressive support for their educators.

What role does this teacher leader fill? Master Teacher

How does the teacher fulfill this role? Identified through an application and vetting process, these curriculum fellows provide key support such as: developing curriculum, designing assessments, creating pacing guides, and other instructional resources for their fellow colleagues to rely on. The curriculum fellows, with the support of the Curriculum and Assessment team, also design and deliver a variety of professional learning options.

How is the teacher's time funded? The Curriculum Fellows are paid $1,000 annually from the Teacher and Student Success Act funds.

Profile of: **Stephan Seabury, Providence Hall High School, Providence Hall Charter School**

What was the need? As the charter school began to gain more students and teachers, there became a need for professional development programs to insure the teachers maintain common goals and teaching competencies especially in terms of supporting at-risk or lower achieving students. The school administration decided to make use of current teachers who showed an ability to lead in these efforts to meet student needs.

What role does the teacher leader fill? MTSS Lead Teacher

How does the teacher fulfill the role? Teachers who showed strengths in working with struggling students in conjunction with other colleagues were asked to become Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) grade level leads. These MTSS leads regularly meet with each other, the counselors and an administrator, to discuss student needs and possible sources for best practices in MTSS. Then these MTSS leads facilitate monthly meetings with their grade level teams to discuss specific students and to review best practices that follow the steps of the MTSS process. These meetings are also used to report school policies for student achievement and the MTSS processes to grade level teachers. MTSS grade level leads then report back to the school MTSS team on the results of meetings, data, and next steps from their grade level MTSS meetings.

How is the teacher's time funded? MTSS grade level leads were given a stipend from Title II, Part A funds.

4—**EDUCATION POLICY ADVOCATE**

Profile of: **Deborah Gatrell, Hunter High School**

What was the need? The LEA desires to inform their school community regarding policy dections and the impact on students and classrooms.

What role does this teacher leader fill? Education Policy Advocate

How does the teacher fulfill this role? Deboarah frequently writes op-eds about current educational specific topics and summarizes educational meeting through Twitter. This provides the public with a wider view of these issues and sets Deborah apart as a teacher leader focused on improving community and school relations.

How is the teacher's time funded? If the teacher participates in outside education advocacy programs such as Utah's Teacher Fellows or as UEA Policy Ambassador, the teacher may receive stipends from these organizations. If the Education Policy Advocate Teacher Leader is a LEA specific position, the LEA should provide a stipend for the educators time outside the classroom and for their expertise.

5—SCHOOL OUTREACH LEAD

Profile of: **Laura Halverson, Joel P Jensen Middle School, Jordan District**

What was the need? Students learning English needed support and to show more progress year-to-year. Principal Bryan Leggat determined that smaller classes, more ESL endorsed teachers, and supplemental support classes would help EL students. Laura Halverson was already in the role of teaching Spanish and English language development.

What role does this teacher leader fill? Laura works to advocate for EL students.

How does the teacher fulfill this role? As principal Bryan Leggat explained to the West Jordan Journal,

> "[S]he represents these kids when they don't necessarily feel like they have a strong voice to support themselves. She'll go to bat for them and go and talk to the teachers.
>
> Halverson also supports teachers, suggesting instructional strategies and preparing them to know how to handle new students who may only speak a few words of English.
>
> New ELL students are also paired with a peer who speaks their native language to help them adjust."

> Laura herself explains that she fosters "[s]trong cooperation and collaboration between myself, the school counselors, registrar, Administration, and ELD committee. …I personally meet with all the students before they take the WIDA test to explain the high stakes involved with their passing the test. I don't directly instruct the higher level students (WIDA scores 3-5), so they don't know me and don't benefit from me 'talking-up' the WIDA all the time in class! …I include ELL in any nomination process for school-wide recognition (of course they have to meet the criteria). I want their efforts and progress recognized. …I advocate for the ELLs whenever a teacher mistakenly says or does something that may impede the student's progress due to ignorance or insensitivity."

How is the teacher's time funded? Laura's time is funded from TSSA funds. Joel P Jensen also uses TSSA funds to pay for two aides specifically for English Learners.

6—**EDUCATION AMBASSADOR**

Profile of: **John Arthur, 2021 Utah Teacher of the Year, Meadowlark Elementary, Salt Lake City School District**

What was the need? Teachers' experiences, input, and expertise is often needed in a variety of education and community organizations.

What role does this teacher leader fill? Education Ambassador

How does the teacher fulfill this role? In this role, John represents on behalf of a variety of educational networks. These include state teachers of the year, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and National Science Teaching Association. John promotes best practices and innovative programs as he contributes to a variety of professional projects, including USBE's Portrait of the Graduate and writing of the new K-6 Social Studies Standards.

John uses his professional expertise to contribute to the success of all teachers and students in the state of Utah. John's willingness to form community partnerships has infused his teaching, benefiting his students through projects with the Utah Film Center, which in turn has benefited the community through the results of their work. An Ambassador is willing to reach out beyond their comfort zone and make change a positive thing.

How is the teacher's time funded? Education Ambassadors are typically compensated by organizations when they contribute to projects, guest speak, or facilitate professional learning.

Teacher Eligibility for Teacher Leadership per Utah Code

In Utah Code Section 53E-6-902**: Teacher Leaders, teachers are defined as follows:**

"(1) As used in this section, "teacher" means an educator who has an assignment to teach in a classroom." This designation reflects how a teacher's work assignment would appear in CACTUS (Comprehensive Administration of Credentials for Teachers in Utah Schools), the statewide teacher credentialing database. For the purposes of this document, the term "teacher" is used to denote educator categories of Regular Classroom Teacher:

> Licensed educators employed by a Utah LEA who carry a full or part-day classroom assignment in a regular, alternative, youth in custody, Dual Immersion, or career and technical setting. (CACTUS Educator Categories, 2016)

A **Special Education Teacher is further defined as follows:**

> This is a subgroup of regular classroom teachers who work with students identified under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Typically, special education teachers are assigned a smaller ratio of students but work in regular classrooms as well as small group and one-on-one instruction. While special education teachers spend the bulk of their day instructing students with disabilities, they also have significant paperwork and assessment responsibilities per federal law [IDEA]. (CACTUS Educator Categories, 2016)

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INSIDE OF BACK COVER

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Sydnee Dickson, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

In partnership with the
Utah Teacher Fellows