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RESOURCE TITLE:

50-State Comparison: Teacher Leadership and Licensure Advancement

On the path to strengthen teacher pipelines, support excellent teaching and improve retention, many states have developed opportunities for teacher

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leadership and advancement. While most states offer advanced licenses to encourage ongoing learning and growth within the teaching profession, many are now also including supports and incentives to encourage more teachers to become leaders in their classrooms, schools and communities. Though district and school leaders drive teacher development and career progressions, state policymakers are creating structures and incentives to support high-quality systems.

Education Commission of the States researched teacher leadership and licensure advancement policies in all states. Click on the questions below for 50-State Comparisons showing how all states approach specific policies, current through September 2018. Or choose to view a specific state's approach by going to the individual **state profiles** page.

- **NEW! Data Visualization:** Click **here** to explore our data set through an interactive web interface.

Definitions

Licensure advancement is the process by which teachers advance from one license tier to another after meeting established requirements. States commonly include input measures (such as obtaining an established number of years of classroom experience and completing additional coursework), as well as output measures (such as evidence of effective teaching), when setting requirements for licensure advancement.

Teacher leadership is the process by which teachers extend their impact — influencing colleagues, principals, members of school communities and beyond to improve teaching practices and support student learning. Leadership opportunities differ from one district or school to the next and often include serving as a mentor or coach to a new teacher, leading a teacher team, participating in school-level decision-

making and vision-setting, and/or advocating for students and the profession at the local or state level.

Key Takeaways

- Thirty states have a licensing system in place that allows teachers to advance beyond a standard professional license. In 17 of these states, teachers are required to demonstrate evidence of effectiveness, either in addition to or in place of other tasks, in order to obtain an advanced license.
- Twenty-two states offer a teacher leader license or endorsement.
- Seventeen states have adopted teacher leader standards; 13 states prescribe the role of the teacher leader in statute or regulation.
- Twenty-four states provide formal supports and/or incentives to teacher leaders.

50-State Comparisons

1. **Does the state have a licensure system that allows teachers to advance beyond a standard professional license?**
2. **What tasks and/or evidence of effectiveness are required for teachers to obtain an advanced license?**
3. **Does the state offer a teacher leader license or endorsement?**
4. **What tasks and/or evidence of effectiveness are required for teachers to obtain a teacher leader license/endorsement?**
5. **Has the state adopted teacher leader standards?**
6. **Does the state define the role (prescribe certain duties) of the teacher leader in statute or regulation?**
7. **Does the state provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders?**
8. **All data points for all states**

Related Resources

- [Teacher Development and Advancement](#)
- [Mitigating Teacher Shortages: Teacher Leadership](#)
- [50-State Comparison: Teacher License Reciprocity](#)

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Teacher Leadership and Licensure Advancement

Does the state provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders?

October 2018

Overview

Twenty-four states offer formal supports and/or incentives for teacher leaders. Examples of state-level supports include: financial incentives; reduced workloads; participation in state advisory committees; professional development catered to teacher leaders.

Note: Though [commonly provided](#), incentives for National Board certification are not included in this data collection.

	Does the state provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders?	Citations
Alabama	Yes. Most individuals who earn an education specialist degree to meet teacher leader requirements earn a pay increase.	Source
Alaska	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Arizona	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Arkansas	Yes. The state provides opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Teacher Leadership Institutes. • Participation in the Teacher Leadership Advisory Group. 	Source 1 Source 2
California	Yes. The state provides opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial incentives. 	Cal. Code Regs. tit. 5, § 13004
Colorado		

	Does the state provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders?	Citations
	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Connecticut	Yes. The state supports opportunities for training in teacher leadership through the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Council and NNSTOY.	Source
Delaware	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
District of Columbia	Yes. The state provides opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Leadership Initiative for Teachers (LIFT) career ladder. • Participation in Teacher Leadership Innovation (TLI) Teacher Leader Roles. • Financial incentives. 	Source 1 Source 2
Florida	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Georgia	Yes. The state provides opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Teacher Leadership Institutes. • Financial incentives (district decision). 	Source
Hawaii	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Idaho	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Illinois	Yes. The state provides opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Illinois Teacher Leadership Network • Participation in the Illinois Teach to Lead Summit 	Source
Indiana	Yes. The state provides opportunities for:	Ind. Code Ann. § 20-20-42.2-4

	Does the state provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders?	Citations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Career Pathways and Mentorship Program. • Financial incentives. 	
Iowa	<p>Yes. The state provides opportunities through the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting collaboration across the state. • Financial incentives. 	Source
Kansas	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Kentucky	<p>Yes. The state provides opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial incentives for teachers who increase their certification rank. 	<p>Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 161.1211 (West)</p> <p>Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 158.070 (West)</p>
Louisiana	<p>Yes. The state provides opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Teacher Leaders program. • Participation as a Department of Education Teacher Leader Advisor. 	Source
Maine	<p>Yes. The state provides opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Teach to Lead Initiative, which aims to promote and expand teacher leadership across the state. 	Source
Maryland	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Massachusetts	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	Source
Michigan	<p>Yes. The state provides opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Teacher Leadership Advisory Council. 	Source

	Does the state provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders?	Citations
Minnesota	Yes. The state supports districts in determining opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial incentives. • Additional contract days. 	Source
Mississippi	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Missouri	Yes. The state provides opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Teacher Academy and the Teacher Academy Graduate Program. 	Source 1 Source 2
Montana	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Nebraska	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Nevada	Yes. The state provides opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Teacher Leader in Residence Opportunity. • Funding for leadership training and development through the Great Teaching and Leading Fund. 	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3
New Hampshire	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
New Jersey	Yes. The state provides opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Teacher Leader Endorsement Advisory Board. 	Source
New Mexico	Yes. The state provides opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Secretary of Education's Teacher Advisory group. • Teacher leaders to act as New Mexico Teacher Leader Network State Ambassadors. • Teacher leaders to act as New Mexico Teacher Leader School Liaisons. 	Source

	Does the state provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders?	Citations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in the Teacher Leader Summit. 	
New York	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
North Carolina	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
North Dakota	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Ohio	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Oklahoma	<p>Yes. Districts can apply to the Department to participate in the Empowering Teachers to Lead framework (or a comparable teacher career path framework) which provides opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in a career ladder with the following stages: Initial, Career, Model, Mentor and Lead. Extended contract days for leadership training for Model, Mentor and Lead Teachers. Financial incentives for Model, Mentor and Lead Teachers. Reduced teaching loads for Mentor and Lead Teachers. <p>Subject to the appropriation of funds or availability of federal funds, districts can apply for grant funding to design and implement the framework.</p> <p>Note: In 2018, the state legislature created two new levels of teaching certificates: 1) Lead Teaching Certificate and, 2) Master Teaching certificate. The certificates will be granted to teachers to assume teacher leadership roles. For the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, the department will identify school districts to implement the certificates on a pilot program basis. Beginning in the 2020-21 school year, the department will make the certificates available to any person who has received a</p>	<p>Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 70, § 6-302 (West)</p> <p>Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 70, § 6-190 (West), S.B. 980 (2018)</p>

	Does the state provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders?	Citations
	<p>recommendation from their local board of education and who meets the eligibility criteria. Teachers who obtain Lead and Master Teaching certificates will be eligible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended contract days for leadership training. • Financial incentives. • Reduced teaching loads. 	
Oregon	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Pennsylvania	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Rhode Island	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
South Carolina	<p>Yes. The state provides opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Foundations in School Leadership Program. • Participation in the collective leadership framework pilot. 	<p>Source 1</p> <p>Source 2</p>
South Dakota	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Tennessee	<p>Yes. The state provides opportunities through the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network, which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns teacher leadership with existing evaluation systems. • Promotes the work of teacher leaders across the state. • Allows districts to create teacher leader models and roles that fit their needs. • Provides professional development and ongoing training. • Creates specific teacher leader roles. • Provides a stipend to eligible teacher leaders. 	<p>Source 1</p> <p>Source 2</p>
Texas		

	Does the state provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders?	Citations
	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Utah	Yes. The state provides opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial incentives. • Reduction in classroom workload. 	Utah Admin. Code r. R277-513
Vermont	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Virginia	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Washington	Yes. The state provides opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Washington State Fellows Network to assist with state standards implementation. 	Source
West Virginia	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	
Wisconsin	Yes. The state provides opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher leadership project grants. • Participation in an annual teacher leadership summit. 	Source
Wyoming	No. The state does not provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders.	

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Mitigating Teacher Shortages: Teacher Leadership

MICAH ANN WIXOM

The first brief in this series, *Teacher Shortages: What We Know*, explores research on teacher shortages and highlights recent state task force findings. This report is one of five policy briefs examining strategies states are using to address shortages:

- 1 ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION
- 2 FINANCIAL INCENTIVES
- 3 INDUCTION AND MENTORSHIP
- 4 EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK
- 5 TEACHER LEADERSHIP



Click on any title to view other reports in this series.

Providing leadership opportunities to teachers can be an effective strategy to **recruit** and **retain** them. A definition of teacher leadership is provided, followed by a summary of supporting research on this strategy, state policy examples and considerations for policymakers.



What are teacher leader programs?

Teacher leader is an ambiguous title covering “expansive territory”¹ – there are few agreed-upon definitions and many kinds of teacher leadership roles. According to a frequently cited definition, teacher leadership is “the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement.”²

Teacher leadership takes on many different flavors and forms at different levels within a school system. Leadership opportunities can include both formal and informal activities, such as participating in a formal mentorship program or informally mentoring colleagues. Teacher leader roles are typically at the organizational or instructional levels or centered on professional development.³ For example, teacher leaders could serve as department chairs, be school-wide teaching coaches or create and present professional development workshops.

Some states have created policies to formalize the teacher leader process in policy. As of 2013, three states had a master teacher designation, eight states had some type of certification endorsements for teacher leaders, 20 states had tiers for advanced or master teachers within their multi-tiered certification systems and four states had introduced teacher leader roles to assist teachers with the Common Core State Standards transition.⁴

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The publication “[Defining Teacher-Leader Roles](#)” from Public Impact’s Opportunity Culture provides a list of potential teacher leader roles and their descriptions.

“[Creating Sustainable Teacher Career Pathways: A 21st Century Imperative](#),” a joint publication by NNSTOY and Pearson, provides an in-depth look at each state’s teacher career path initiatives.



What does the research say?

WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND RETENTION

Although research directly linking teacher leadership opportunities with increased retention is scarce, it is often asserted that experienced teachers “who have opportunities to share their expertise”⁵ experience greater job satisfaction and are more likely to stay in the profession.

Teachers leave schools or the teaching profession entirely for many reasons. Some research indicates that job dissatisfaction, having little influence or autonomy in their school and few opportunities for professional advancement could be significant sources of attrition.⁶ Additional research cites a lack of career pathways as a barrier to retaining teachers, particularly the best ones.⁷ In other words, some teachers leave a seemingly “flat profession”⁸ because they feel they have no voice in their school.



Teacher leadership opportunities can, at least to some degree, offset these concerns. For example, in a recent survey state teachers of the year rated teacher leadership opportunities as one of their most significant professional growth experiences,⁹ while in a different survey another set of teachers expressed “a great deal of satisfaction” in their leadership work.¹⁰ In a case study of eight school districts’ career advancement programs, teacher leaders reported greater job satisfaction and some districts with teacher leadership programs saw an overall increase in both retention rates and teacher applications.¹¹ Finally, research found a strong link between teachers having a voice in their school and staying in the profession.¹²

Thus, research indicates that teacher leadership opportunities can improve teachers’ job satisfaction and provide them a greater voice in their working environment, potentially improving teacher retention.

Sustaining Teacher Leader Programs

Despite the perceived benefits of teacher leader programs, sustaining them can be challenging.

While school systems may receive grant funding to launch a teacher leader program, finding long-term and sustainable funding is one of the most significant challenges.¹³ For example, of the eight school districts reviewed in the aforementioned case study, the majority sought outside funding to start the program but many districts were struggling to identify program funding going forward.¹⁴ Up-front planning is critical to maintain the initiative long term, and some districts have found it useful to redirect existing staffing and professional development funds to the initiative.¹⁵

A school system’s environment also does much to sustain teacher leadership programs. Specifically, the long-term health of an initiative is affected by a system’s culture, governance structures and the roles and relationships of teachers and administrators.¹⁶

- **Culture.** School systems that value openness and teamwork and where administrators and teacher leaders work together and communicate with staff may be more likely to have successful teacher leader initiatives.¹⁷
- **Governance Structures.** Traditional, top-down governance hierarchies tend to hinder teacher leader initiatives while “shared or participatory” leadership structures, such as site-based decision making, tend to foster these programs.¹⁸
- **Roles and Relationships.** Successful teacher leader programs are highly dependent on supportive relationships between teacher leaders and both their colleagues and their principals¹⁹ plus strong district leadership.²⁰ Given the ambiguity of teacher leadership, both school and district leadership play a crucial role in shaping the direction of the teacher leadership program and creating a culture that supports the initiative.²¹

In short, teacher leadership programs are more likely to succeed if they are not leadership programs in name only, but are in a positive school system culture with administrators who actively seek to support and sustain the program and the teacher leaders themselves.



State examples



Iowa

In 2013, the **Iowa** General Assembly passed legislation establishing the Teacher Leader Compensation System, a teacher career paths framework aimed at recruiting and retaining effective teachers. These policies established five teacher levels. For each level they defined salary requirements and general duties and outline the amount of time that teachers at each of the five levels should spend in the classroom or in other leadership duties. School districts may implement one of two prescribed models or select a third that meets certain criteria: minimum salary, rigorous selection process, leadership roles extending beyond initial and career teacher roles, increased coaching and mentorship for teachers and a good-faith effort that at least 25 percent the teacher workforce participates in teacher leadership roles. Districts may apply for planning grants.²²

For more information about the financial incentives in Iowa’s Teacher Leaders Compensation System plus program accomplishments, see Education Commission of the States’ *Mitigating Teacher Shortages: Financial Incentives* by Stephanie Aragon.



Tennessee

The **Tennessee** State Board of Education adopted the Teacher Leader Model Standards in 2011, and in 2013 the Department of Education created the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network to help implement these standards. Over the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years, two cohorts of representatives from school districts statewide met and developed teacher leadership models that are adaptable for various districts depending on their needs.²³ In addition, Tennessee state leaders recognized the value of using teacher leadership in 2011-2012 while planning a shift to the Common Core. Seeing the need for “bottom-up” Common Core implementation, the Department of Education recruited and trained 200 highly effective teachers in implementing the standards. These teachers then taught these skills to 13,000 additional teachers who served as “Core Coaches” for their districts and schools.²⁴

MORE ANALYSIS



For additional state spotlights plus a thorough overview of teacher leadership policy issues, see *Policy Snapshot: Increasing Teacher Leadership* from the center on great teachers & leaders at AIR.

MORE ANALYSIS



National Network of State Teacher of the Year’s *Teacher Leader Model Standards*, created in 2008, include competencies for teacher leadership roles.

The Teacher Leadership Competencies, created jointly by Center for Teaching Quality, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the National Education Association, outline competencies for three different arenas of teacher leadership.



Policy considerations

When revising or creating teacher leadership programs, policymakers could consider the following:

- Look for policy changes or policy barriers that would affect the initiative.²⁵
- Seek teacher and administrator input on the program.²⁶
- Consider sustainability issues, including long-term funding streams beyond initial start-up grants.²⁷
- Consider the type of teacher leadership position that would be useful the school system, including the roles, duties and responsibilities of teacher leaders.
- Adopt teacher leader standards.²⁸
- Create a state teacher leader certification.²⁹
- Provide teacher leaders with support and development opportunities.³⁰
- Tie teacher leadership positions with increased compensation.

MORE ANALYSIS



The publication [Teacher Career Advancement Initiatives: Lessons Learned from Eight Case Studies](#) from the National Network of State Teachers of the Year and Pearson offers multiple elements to consider when designing a teacher leader initiative.



Endnotes

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