



Bringing Oakland Together for Our Students

A. Teachers are Leaders and Share Decision-Making

Questions:

1. In which school-site decisions should teachers be involved?
2. What teacher leadership roles should exist at each school site?
3. What is the role of a teacher in determining professional development at school sites?

Why this Matters:

- **Teacher Leadership Inspires Teacher Investment:** Distributing leadership empowers teachers to play a greater role in the administration of the school, “brings decision-making authority close to the classroom, and gives teachers a new sense of responsibility and ownership in the school.”¹ According to a recent study, the primary reason teachers reported for leaving their previous school was the “lack of opportunities for growth/advancement.”²
- **Teacher Leadership Inspires Student Success:** Successful schools continually rely on the leadership and collaboration of their teachers. As noted in the *Turnaround Challenge*, “[t]o continue to add value to the work of the team, each [teacher] must continue to learn as well. Instead of suffering the stresses and challenges of high-poverty schools in isolation, teachers in [High Poverty, High Performing (“HHPH”)] schools work together incessantly and naturally. The HHPH effective practice literature abounds in professional learning communities, common planning time, collaborative professional development, common lesson study, and group reviews of student work.”³ To ensure that site decisions are effective and relevant to student learning, “[t]hose who work with students on a day-to-day basis – namely the teachers – must be involved in the substantive decisions regarding changes that affect their day-to-day lives.”⁴
- **Professional Development Should Include Leadership Development:** According to the California Teachers Association’s vision for developing strong, effective teachers, “California should fully fund professional development that spans the spectrum of a teacher’s career...continuing through a comprehensive Peer Assistance and Review program.”⁵

Notes on the Current Reality in OUSD:

- **Teacher Leadership in Oakland is Site-Dependent:** The Oakland Education Association (OEA)-OUSD contract does not detail career ladders or teacher leadership opportunities. Teacher participation in decision-making varies significantly across the district. For example, at some schools, teachers and parents are highly involved in interviewing potential new teachers for the site. At other schools, decisions about hiring are made by principals alone, or by the central office. At some schools, teachers are asked to provide significant input on budget priorities. At other schools, budgeting is done primarily by the principal in collaboration with central office staff.
- **Teacher Leadership is Not Funded:** Many school sites have little to no budget to compensate teachers for the work they do to organize and support school-wide activities and professional development. The budget crisis of the last several years has significantly limited school communities’ ability to resource teacher leadership roles and compensation for time spent on school-wide projects and decision-making.

¹ Oregon Small School Initiative, Distributive Leadership, n.d. available at <http://www.e3smallschools.org/dl.html> Accessed March 31, 2011.

² The New Teacher Project (2011), Retention of High Performers. pg. 13, available at http://schoolleaderstoolbox.org/assets/tools/TNTP_Toolkit_3_-_Retention_TSLT_0311.pdf

³ Calkins, Andrew, et al, (2007) “The Turnaround Challenge,” pg. 35.

⁴ Marzano, R. (2003). What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action, pg.174.

⁵ California Teachers Association, Teacher Quality, n.d. available at <http://www.cta.org/Issues-and-Action/Teacher-Quality/Testing-full-brief.aspx>, accessed March 30, 2011.