

A Study of Teacher Leadership

in New York City

Finding #4

Teacher Leadership Connoted Opportunities for Advancement that Influenced Commitment to Teaching

OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS, the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) has sought to increase opportunities for teacher leadership in New York City schools. During this time, NYCDOE has invested in teacher leadership through the federally financed Teacher Incentive Fund and by working with the United Federation of Teachers to integrate new teacher leadership roles into the teachers' contract.

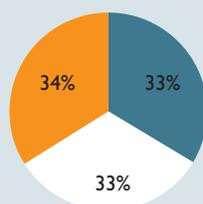
One key hypothesis of the teacher leadership efforts in New York City was that the existence of a career lattice in schools could bolster teachers' commitment to teaching. Recent studies have highlighted the problem posed by the high rate of teacher turnover in public schools (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014). Survey responses from more than 4,000 educators working in buildings staffed with teacher leaders suggest that a sense of commitment to the profession was promoted by the presence of teacher leaders.

Teachers who worked with teacher leaders reported greater commitment

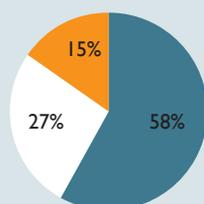
While other reports in this series highlight teacher leaders' sense of efficacy in the role (see *Finding #1: Principals and Teacher Leaders Were Highly Satisfied with Roles*), it appears that teachers who worked with teacher leaders also saw the importance of the role in relation to their own commitment to the work. More than half (58%) of teachers who worked regularly with teacher leaders agreed that they

were involved in conversations about key school decisions, as compared to one-third (33%) of those who did not work with teacher leaders. Teachers who worked frequently with teacher leaders also expressed a greater commitment to remain in teaching (79%) than did colleagues who did not work with teacher leaders at all (67%).

Teachers who worked with teacher leaders reported greater involvement in conversations about key school decisions



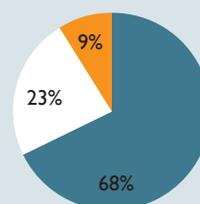
Never worked with teacher leader



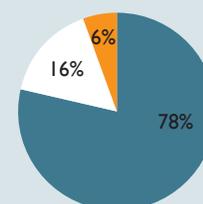
Worked with teacher leader more than once a month

Agree
Neutral*
Disagree

Teachers who worked with teacher leaders reported greater commitment to remain in teaching



Never worked with teacher leader



Worked with teacher leader more than once a month

*Survey respondents were given a six-point scale. The Neutral label applies to responses of "Somewhat Agree" and "Somewhat Disagree," representing the two midpoints on the scale.

Background

AT THE OUTSET OF THE 2014–15 SCHOOL YEAR, the NYCDOE Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality commissioned Eskolta School Research and Design to explore the development and impact of teacher leadership roles in New York City schools. In November 2014 and April 2015, surveys were sent to every City school in which a teacher leader role was staffed. Responses were received from 392 schools, providing a broad and representative sample of the population, with a total of 178 principals, 641 teacher leaders, and 3,922 of the teachers they supported responding. This policy brief shares one of four key findings that are of particular note in the 2014–15 analysis.

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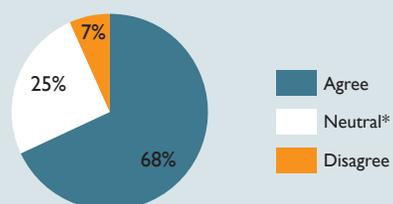
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Professional commitment influenced by career lattice and support from colleagues

More than two-thirds (68%) of principals agreed that having teacher leaders in their schools helped them to retain their best teachers. By analyzing responses from teachers and teacher leaders, a model was constructed to explain what was associated with teachers' commitment to teaching. The strongest predictor in such statistical models was whether teachers believed there were opportunities for advancement in the profession in New York City. The

second strongest predictor was whether they felt valued by their colleagues. These factors were far stronger predictors of teachers' commitment to teaching than others, such as teachers' years of experience in the profession or the frequency with which they met with teacher leaders. This suggests that the presence of a career lattice in one's own school may be an important factor in retention.

Principals reported having a teacher leader helped them retain their best teachers



Opportunities for advancement and being valued by colleagues are strongest predictors of commitment to teaching



R Squared = .200 Adjusted R Squared = .199

*Survey respondents were given a six-point scale. The Neutral label applies to responses of "Somewhat Agree" and "Somewhat Disagree," representing the two midpoints on the scale.

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