



Building Distributed Leadership in the Philadelphia School District An Overview

University of Pennsylvania/
School District of Philadelphia



Agenda

1. Overview: Goals of the project
2. Why distributed leadership?
3. What is distributed leadership?
4. Design plan of project
5. Benefits to you and your school
6. Commitments from you and your school
7. Contact information



Overview

- Funded at \$4.9 million by the Annenberg Foundation.
- A 4-year project focused on 16 Philadelphia schools; 4 elementary schools in year 1; 2 elementary and 2 high schools in year 2; 4 elementary and 4 high schools in year 3.
- Written and directed by Dr. John DeFlaminis, Executive Director of the Penn Center for Educational Leadership.
- Targeted to the training and development of model distributed leadership teams.

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Overview: Goals of the Project

- To develop model distributed leadership teams and school communities in 16 Philadelphia schools.
- To develop a targeted professional development strategy for distributed leadership.
- To develop a plan for a regional leadership development center.

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Overview: Goals of the Project

- To develop over 80 effective teacher instructional leaders who can support principals and their schools in achieving and sustaining building-level instructional leadership.
- To utilize other leadership-building strategies including professional learning communities and coaching to support the teams and achieve improved instructional focus and student outcomes.

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Why distributed leadership?

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Why Distributed Leadership?

Contemporary educational reform places a great premium upon the relationship between leadership and school improvement. Effective leaders exercise an indirect but powerful influence on the effectiveness of the school and on the achievement of students (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000).

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Why Distributed Leadership?

Many believe and have written that:

“The days of the principal as the lone instructional leaders are over. We no longer believe that one administrator can serve as the instructional leader for an entire school without the substantial participation of other educators (Elmore, 2000; Lambert, 1998; Lambert et al., 1995; Lambert, Collay, Dietz, Kent & Richert, 1997; Olson, 2000; Poplin, 1994; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001).”

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Why Distributed Leadership?

The old model of formal, one-person leadership leaves the substantial talents of teachers largely untapped. Improvements achieved under this model are not easily sustainable; when the principal leaves, promising programs often lose momentum and fade away. This model suffers from what Fullan (2003) calls the individualistic fallacy.

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Why Distributed Leadership?

The process of change required to move to the next levels of reform will be incredibly demanding. What is needed is not a few good leaders, but large numbers to make the extraordinary efforts required (Fullan, 2003).

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Why Distributed Leadership?

Richard Elmore (2000) argues that the problem of scaling up school improvement, whether it is in a school or a school system, is one of capacity building and specialization. Building a broad base of capacity is not possible if control is limited to a few individuals. The solution, he argues, is the broader distribution of leadership.

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Why Distributed Leadership?

“At the Consortium of Policy Research in Education (CPRE) at the University of Pennsylvania, in their study of a broad range of school reform initiatives...they all hold one thing in common: They all implicitly distribute leadership across multiple individuals in schools” (Supovitz, 2000).

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Why Distributed Leadership?

MISE has learned over the past decade that distributed leadership—both in schools and in districts—works. It produces:

- good results (measured by the quality of the professional development and the curriculum and assessment tools produced)
- the successful recruitment of teachers into intensive professional development
- the emergence of teacher-led professional communities within and across the schools

Riordan, CPRE, 2003

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What is distributed leadership?

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Underlying Principles:

1. Instructional leadership is and must be a shared, community undertaking.
2. Leadership is the professional work of everyone in the school (Lambert, 2003).
3. The traditional model of formal, one-person leadership leaves the substantial talents of teachers largely untapped; and promising programs often lose momentum and fade away when the leader changes or leaves.


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Underlying Principles:


4. Instructional improvement requires that people must look to multiple sources of expertise to work in a context around a common problem.
5. This distributed expertise leads to distributed leadership (Spillane, et al, 2001).
6. Distributed leadership is characterized as a form of collective leadership, in which teachers develop expertise by working collaboratively.
7. "Powerful leadership is distributed because the work of instructional improvement is distributed" (Elmore, 2003).

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Spillane's ongoing research in 13 Chicago schools suggest that the work of leading instruction is distributed among multiple leaders including the principal, assistant principal, teacher leaders and regular classroom teachers, and other specialists in the school.

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What is Distributed Leadership?

A distributed view of leadership also recognizes that leading schools requires multiple leaders (Spillane, 2006), though the number involved depends upon routine and subject area. Recent work in more than 100 U.S. schools shows that responsibility for leadership functions typically was distributed among three to seven people, including administrators and specialists (Camburn, Rowan & Taylor, 2003).

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What is Distributed Leadership?

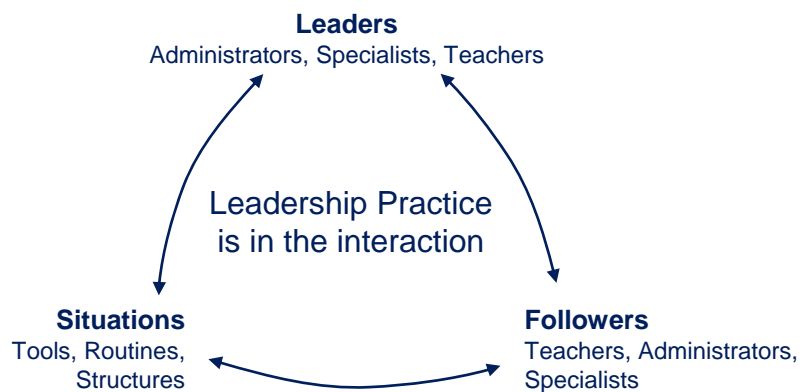
- The Leader-Plus Aspect (who)
 - Focuses on **who** is involved in leadership
 - “Leader-Plus” is short for “Leader-Plus Other Leaders”
- The Leadership Practice Aspect (how)
 - Addresses **how** leadership practice is enacted
 - Critical issue is not whether leadership is distributed but how it is distributed
 - Attention to **interactions**, not just actions.

Spillane, 2006

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What is Distributed Leadership?

The Leadership Practice Aspect



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What is Distributed Leadership?

Leaders not only influence followers but are also influenced by them. Thus, leadership is not simply something that is done to followers; followers in interaction with leaders and the situation contribute to defining leadership practice (Spillane, 2006). The Distributed Leadership Study identified interdependence as the primary characteristic of interactions among leaders.

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Design Plan:

- Spillane's work at Northwestern University will guide the training and development of distributed teams (3-5 teachers and the principal) in this project.
- All will be comprehensively trained as instructional leadership teams, using modules designed and based on Spillane's work. Many will be adapted from Penn's Mid-Career Doctoral Program, the Aspiring Principal's Program and Academy for Leadership in Philadelphia Schools (ALPS).

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Design Plan:

Distributed leadership teams will receive training to lead buildings in instructional improvement and student achievement. Some key aspects of this work are:

- Developing a shared vision of informed practice and supplemental training in best practices in instruction.
- Developing professional learning communities (focused on instructional improvement) in each building.
- Developing capacity for analysis and understanding of student work and data.

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Benefits

Over 100 hours of high quality professional development and support for teacher leaders and principals will be delivered by national experts and Penn faculty with Act 48 credits and at least 3 graduate continuing education credits for all participants. Penn's credit cost \$3,500 per credit (1 credit = 30 class hours).

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Benefits

All principals and teachers on the teams will receive a \$3,000 stipend for year one and \$2,200 for each additional year for participation in the summer training and all project activities.

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Benefits

Leadership coaching and mentoring will be provided to support the teams in creating a distributed leadership school setting. Other school and individual supports will be provided including professional development targeted to identified needs.

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Benefits

Released time (through substitutes) will be provided by the grant for teams to work with building faculties and for follow-up training which might be necessary.

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Benefits

This project supports your school improvement plan and allows for vertical communication within schools *and* horizontal communication between schools. Elements of the project will support the current District initiatives and contribute to increased CSAP scores and building professional learning communities. You will have many ways to share successes with colleagues on an on-going basis.

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Benefits

If your school has an interest but is not selected this year, the fact that you agreed to be part of the project this year one will increase your chances to receive distributed leadership training in future years. This year, we will be selecting **four elementary** and **four secondary** schools.

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Future Benefits

\$300,000 has been built into the grant to develop a plan for a regional leadership development center to ensure future building development and leadership sustainability.

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Commitments

Buildings interested will be included only with a 2/3 vote of agreement by the building staff. Building principals, building representatives and distributed leadership team members will be requested to sign a Memorandum of Agreement indicating their commitment to participate.

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Commitments

All participants will be required to commit to the conditions that support the initiative. They are:

- A commitment of 1 week in June (June 23-27, 2008) for summer training at Penn.
- A commitment of 1-2 Saturdays and some released time throughout the year for follow-up training.
- Assist and help manage the ongoing development of the professional learning communities with a focus on instruction.
- Coach and support professional learning communities.
- Develop and promote a shared vision of informed practice.
- Support and regularly update and share best practices in instruction and curricular areas with colleagues.

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Commitments

- Assist teachers who are not members of the team in analyzing, understanding and using student data.
- Support the principal and each other in efforts to improve the content knowledge and instructional strategies of teachers and, as a result, the student achievement in your school as well as other participating schools.
- Work collaboratively with the principal and other teacher leaders in promoting quality instruction for all students.
- Allow evaluators to enter and observe individual classrooms for Initiative evaluation/assessment purposes.

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Commitments

The additional commitments required from principals are:

- Oversee the work of the distributed leadership team in the area of instruction to maximize the team's effectiveness
- Complete a short monthly progress report
- Participate in training, to lead the selection of teacher leaders, arrange schedules and other activities consistent with their role in building an effective team
- Administer yearly goals consistent with the distributed leadership objectives.
- Utilize leadership coaches to support the distributed leadership team

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Commitments

The additional commitments required from teacher leaders are:

- Completion of an application and interview for the teacher instructional leadership position.
- To commit to 2-4 hours per week beyond or within the instructional day for the teacher leader work (in addition to occasional released time).

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Cohort 1 Schools

Eight Philadelphia schools are currently participating in this project and would be a good sources of information if you would like to consult a colleague. They are:

- Birney Elementary
- A.B. Day Elementary
- Duckrey Elementary
- Taggart Elementary
- Forrest Elementary
- Martha Washington Elem.
- Parkway Northwest High
- Northeast High

Representatives from two of these schools are here today.

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We would be pleased to come to your school to discuss the project with your faculty. If you wish us to do so, please call or fax the interest form (in your folder) or call us to schedule us to do so.

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Contact

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