CULTIVATING TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS:
ENCOURAGING THE LEADERSHP POTENTIAL IN ALL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Teacher leaders are people who lead by example and, in this school, most are not afraid to speak up even if it is not politically correct. Teacher leaders are selfless people who are looking out for what is best for all, especially the students. They are risk takers.

With the introduction of technology and accountability measures, education appears to have changed more in the first seventeen years of the 21st century then in the entire prior 100 years of our nation. The knowledge and skills required by school administrators has greatly expanded. To that end, it seems most appropriate that schools are lead not only by a principal, but also by the teachers. The collective knowledge of a group of professionals is stronger than the knowledge of one individual person. Teacher leadership appears as a natural concept to utilize in order to achieve successful school reform and to increase the use of technology as an instructional tool. This study focuses on the specific actions of building principals in public secondary schools which will cultivate and nurture the leadership potential in teachers. A qualitative study, this research involved a multi-case study approach and focused on three public secondary schools spanning two Pennsylvania counties. Ninety-four surveys were conducted of professional employees. Of those, three building principals and seven of their teachers were selected to be observed and interviewed. While teacher leadership requires active steps be taken by both teachers and principals, this research centered on what the principal needs to do in order to nurture teachers to be leaders within their schools. A culture of trust and collaboration is essential, as is a shared vision of where the school is headed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although the idea of shared leadership in schools has always been a good one, in our quick-paced, 21st century lives it seems even more crucial for principals and teachers to work collaboratively in providing leadership within the school setting. Teacher leadership and successful school reform seem to be inseparable. Formal teacher leadership roles such as department chair, instructional leader, or instructional coach exist, but informal leaders clearly help to influence the culture and climate of a school, in turn influencing the educational program. School change is a complex, dynamic process. Leaders are needed to motivate and inspire those around them. In using teacher leaders to assist in reform, public education stands a better chance at being successful. The purpose of this qualitative research is to focus on those teacher leaders, formal or informal, who provide influence in the school setting and to determine how to cultivate that leadership in order to benefit the entire school and, more specifically, the students. The ultimate goal is for continuous improvement of teaching and learning, with the ultimate result being increased achievement for each and every student.

Background

Let's briefly look at the developments in public education that influenced this study. While in some ways public education seems not to have changed in the last 100 years, in other ways it has changed dramatically. Four areas will be presented as having the biggest influence in the need for more than just a principal to lead the charge in improving the education provided to public school students.

First, a reauthorized version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has said that no child shall be left behind. ESEA was originally signed into law in 1965 by President Lyndon Baines Johnson and the intention was to be a civil rights law which served low-income students, provided federal grants for textbooks and library books, funded special education centers, and provided additional federal funding to improve the quality of education in our country. However, on reauthorization as No Child Left Behind (ESEA, 2001), beginning in 2002 accountability measures were put into place regarding academic achievement. The Pennsylvania Department of Education interpreted those measures to mean that by 2014 all children would be required to pass a state-developed standardized test in the areas of reading and mathematics in specified grade levels. The governmental pressure placed on schools to "leave no child behind" has caused extreme stress for both educators and students. While the theory behind the law was noble, the students' entire academic performance would be judged simply on a few academic tests. For children with special needs or language barriers, merely taking the tests can be a daunting task. Yet the public schools are often judged solely on the scores of these tests and any other academic accomplishments of the students are overlooked. In teacher preparation programs, teachers learn to develop tests based upon content either directly taught to students or the tests may have students demonstrate content learned by analyzing and synthesizing it, using it in another context. The state-developed tests have teachers feeling as though they may not have properly prepared the students since they may not have taught the specific content tested. Additionally, the tests have tended to change from year-to-year, thus leaving educators feeling as though they are shooting at a moving target. The demands for a high quality comprehensive school program and the accountability for that program could best be met with a larger team of leaders in each school. That is, rather than having school leadership

come from a top down approach, more can be accomplished by adding teachers to the core leadership team, making decisions on how best to use data to drive instruction, sharing educational best practices, etc.

In December of 2015, President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), a bipartisan measure which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and updated the requirements of NCLB from 2002. ESSA includes provisions that are to help ensure success for students and schools and eliminate unrealistic student performance targets set by the federal government and based upon tests alone. However, as of this writing, those student performance targets and school ratings have not yet been determined by the state government and the subject area academic tests are still dominating the educational forefront in Pennsylvania.

A second area that currently dominates the minds of educators and especially school administrators is school funding. In Pennsylvania the bulk of public school funding comes from the local residents in the form of property taxes. Beyond that, a minimal percentage of the overall budget is from the state government, and even less is received from the federal government. When this structure was initially imposed, the idea was held that everyone in the local community should contribute to the schools in order to support a well-educated community. In turn, if schools in a community are viewed as "good schools", property values will be reflective of the schools. However, with rising costs in all areas of life, taxpayers regularly fight an increase in school taxes. Additionally, the system of funding seems antiquated since "community" in this century may now be viewed more on a global level. Regardless, with funding sources slowing to a trickle, school personnel are forced to be creative in terms of doing more with less. In some cases, this may mean larger class sizes which could possibly have a

negative impact on student achievement. Those larger classes may include increased numbers of special education students. In other cases it may mean fewer books, supplies, or technology. Federal initiatives may have initially contributed to the proliferation of teacher leadership positions such as instructional coaches for reading or math. However, those positions may now be in jeopardy and it will be important for both school administrators and teachers to work collaboratively to determine how best to utilize the available funds. With the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) in December of 2004 under President George W. Bush, special education students are to spend as much time as possible in regular education settings and special education teachers needed to become "highly qualified" in the core content areas they are teaching. Both getting teachers to the highly qualified status and providing additional training regarding instructing special education students in the regular classrooms have caused financial distress to public school districts and emotional stress to individual teachers.

Another area requiring a change in the leadership style within public schools is in regard to the changing demographics of the student population. Many schools, especially those in urban and suburban settings, are facing much more diversity in the student body. This diversity may be in terms of ethnic backgrounds or socioeconomic status. For example, in an urban/suburban school district in Southcentral PA the "minority" population in the high school has quadrupled in the last ten years and the poverty level has also increased significantly. Additionally, while the population of English Language Learners had been merely a handful of Spanish-speaking students, it has grown to more than a dozen students who speak at least six different languages. While population changes are not necessarily a bad thing, change in and of itself can be stressful

and teachers must become more acclimated with new and/or different instructional strategies which will increase the learning opportunities for this new student body.

Finally, the influx of technology as an innovative learning tool may be viewed as both a blessing and a curse. First, people may be more accessible and constantly in touch, but building principals often express concern about the mounds of emails received daily and the time it takes to respond to each. Second, technology has also brought forth a vast source of new programs that can be used for educational purposes. While many of these programs are impressive learning tools, a number of them are not, leaving educators to carefully sift through each to determine which are worth incorporating into the curriculum and which are not. Once incorporated, staff members need to be trained on how best to utilize these programs as instructional learning tools. It is difficult for one person (a building principal) or even a small group (the building principal and his or her assistants) to be fully aware of the multitude of programs available, then know enough about those programs to train others. Teacher leaders can be a vital source of knowledge and support in the area of technology.

In citing current educational trends that make teacher leadership more important than ever, Reason and Reason (2011) include the following:

- **Trend #1 -** Greater Levels of Complexity in the Profession – classrooms are more heterogeneous and diverse than ever.
- **Trend #2** - Continued Focus on Accountability and Results – as an era of accountability evolves, teachers will increasingly be required to own their results.
- **Trend #3** - The Overwhelming Trend toward Personalization – technology has allowed us to personalize our lives in unique ways. In a culture that involves high levels of personalization, we are sure to be more resistant to change that is top-down and doesn't consider personal thoughts and ideas. The need for teacher leaders will be greater than ever as we will grow to expect them to either lead the change themselves or be instrumentally involved with whatever changes are necessary in leading schools.
- **Trend #4** - Embarking on the Age of Learning – The future will bring both accelerated learning expectations and a greater need to develop the capacity to learn in a variety of places and modalities. Lifelong learning will be nonnegotiable and our ability to adapt

and continue to learn will arguably be just as important as any learning we have gained up to that point.

- **Trend #5** - The Influence of Networks and Open Sourcing – As teachers become more adept at networking, it is likely that national and international cohorts of teachers who serve students at similar points in their development will come together to share ideas, resources, and key innovations.
- **Trend #6** - The Emerging Learning Needs of Teachers Who are Digital Natives – People who have grown up with digital sensibilities face innovation and the challenges of change with a much different perspective on solutions than their predecessors. Digital natives are highly collaborative and willing to get input from multiple sources when making a decision. (pp. xiv-xvii)

The knowledge and skills required of school administrators have greatly expanded. Thus, leaders must be able to build capacity in themselves and others in order to respond swiftly, knowledgeably, and responsibly to the constant currents of uncertainty and change. The idea of teacher leadership was advanced as early as 1996 when Katzenmeyer and Moller published *Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Leadership Development for Teachers.* In this work, they claimed that teachers have the potential to exercise leadership. The metaphor of the sleeping giant was used to illustrate not only the current dormant status of teacher leadership, but also the power that might be exerted if aroused. A lone building principal cannot be totally knowledgeable in the multitude of areas before him/her, nor should that be the expectation. Distributing leadership responsibilities among staff members seems to be a more effective practice. Teachers are intelligent beings with much to offer to their educational settings. Distributed leadership should not merely be an exercise in participatory democracy; it is to be based on trust, as well as the certain knowledge that no single leader possesses the knowledge, skills, and talent to lead an organization (Reeves, 2006). Given the opportunity, many teachers would flourish as leaders within their school buildings or districts. An important aspect of the principalship is to build leadership capacity among teachers and to empower them to become leaders. Cultivating teacher leaders implies a redistribution of power and a re-alignment of

authority within a school organization. It means creating conditions in which people work and learn together, where they work toward a shared purpose of determined goals.

Cultivation of teacher leaders requires a move away from the traditional top-down management approach and a move toward teachers taking responsibility, as well as accountability. The concept of teacher leadership endorses the principle that all teachers have the skills, abilities, and aptitude to lead and should be trusted to do so. Advocates of school improvement suggest that utilizing teacher leadership is a key element in achieving school and classroom improvement goals.

Statement of the Problem

With this information as a backdrop and the imperative need for school improvement in our country, it is evident that teacher leadership must be cultivated so that schools can operate in a way that is conducive to providing the best possible education for each and every child. Scholars have rarely investigated how people become informal leaders, those who model learning and innovation, who develop relationships in order to extend their own learning, and who influence others. The main question focused upon in this research was: How can teacher leadership be cultivated in public secondary schools? More specifically, what actions of public school administrators will seemingly encourage the cultivation of teacher leaders? To answer these questions, one would also need to define what teacher leadership is in a public secondary school setting, as well as describing the characteristics of these leaders. An assumption of this research is that utilization of teacher leaders will produce positive results for teacher leaders personally and, more importantly, the creation of a more effective learning environment for students.

Despite the expansion of teacher leadership roles, the education field has not established an agreed-upon definition of teacher leadership or set clear guidelines for professional practice (Swanson et al., 2011). Even when titles are identical, roles and responsibilities are rarely the same. Lack of recognition and support for teacher leaders also continues to be an issue. Informal teacher leaders could be defined as those who are looked to as leaders due to the respect they receive from their peers, not necessarily through any position they hold. Lambert (2003) explains this more as the difference between actions and roles. Actions may precede or accompany roles; they may include asking thoughtful questions in a staff meeting, bringing a fresh perspective to a conversation or initiating new ways of getting tasks accomplished. Though teachers may not always be in the position to take on new roles, they can always engage in acts of leadership. Roles, on the other hand, include sets of actions performed within a labeled framework. Roles, such as team leader, department chair, instructional coach, etc., require us to tap new inner resources and adopt new responsibilities. In most roles, teachers need to understand and represent others, convene and lead conversations, identify and mobilize resources, and connect the thinking and planning of a given group with that of the whole staff.

To answer the stated research question, the term "teacher leadership" will first be defined and characteristics of teacher leaders will be explained. Additionally, perspectives of both teachers and building principals regarding teacher leadership will be explored.

Purpose of the Study

If teachers feel confident in their abilities to be leaders, they will assume responsibility for the learning of all students. This single outcome from teacher leadership can affect teaching and learning throughout the school (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). The purpose of this study is

to identify secondary teacher leaders and to determine what is needed in order to cultivate their leadership abilities, opportunities, and/or skills. An underlying question raised in this study is to explore the possible relationship between distributed or parallel leadership and the enhancement of the educational program provided to the students, thus positively impacting student achievement.

In his study regarding the impact of teacher leadership, Reeves (2008) found that these leaders not only exert significant influence on the performance of students, but they also influence the performance of other teachers and school leaders. The educators in his study reported that they were more likely to be influenced by the professional practices and action research of their peers than they were to be influenced by journal articles or undergraduate or graduate courses. Though not specifically talking about teachers, Malcolm Gladwell says that when people need advice, they do not ask the leader or the trainer. They ask Jill. Jill is the person he calls a "maven,"[1] those relatively rare people who not only know a disproportionate number of other people but also seem to influence them. Jill is sought out for her advice on everything from restaurants to computers (p. 63, 2002). Numerous "mavens" prevail in education.

Research Questions

This study identified teacher leaders and examined their perspectives regarding what motivates them to perform in leadership roles. Building principals were also interviewed to determine their position on the topic of teacher leadership and to identify their perspectives regarding how best to nurture this type of leadership.

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[1] "Maven" is a Yiddish word normally defined as a person who is an expert in a given field.

Research question: How can teacher leadership be cultivated in public secondary schools? More specifically, what actions of selected school administrators seem related to encouraging the cultivation of teacher leaders?

- In what ways do teachers exercise leadership in these selected public secondary schools?

- What are some of the specific characteristics of teacher leaders in these selected public secondary schools?

- Of student and teacher benefits, what extent, if any, appear to be related to teacher leadership in these selected schools?

Conceptual/Theoretical Perspective

Within a school setting, teachers may display leadership traits in a variety of ways, both formally and informally. Formal roles such as department leaders, team leaders, and curriculum committee members are easy to identify. However, the informal leaders, those without titles, may be more obscure, yet as or more influential. The literature is rich in discussions of shared or distributed leadership, but this research includes the idea of utilizing the concept of parallel leadership in order to enhance teaching and learning within the school. Crowther et al. (2009) define parallel leadership as a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action to build school capacity. It embodies the three distinct qualities of mutual trust, shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression. Shared or distributed leadership seems to focus more on simply dividing the leadership tasks without emphasizing the idea of trust and shared purpose. Simply using the term "parallel" indicates that harmony exists between teachers and administrators.

In first using a survey to determine those teachers and administrators with a propensity toward having teachers leading the educational charge, observations and individual interviews then occurred to determine specifics needed in order to cultivate or nurture teacher leadership within a school. If teachers are willing to assist in leading educational reform, it is anticipated that achievement will be positively impacted.

York-Barr and Duke (2004) highlighted three characteristics of teacher leaders: respect among their school peers, an orientation toward continuous learning, and personal capacity to influence others' practices. Additionally, they described the leadership work as being valued in their school's culture, visible, negotiated, and shared. Finally, they include four conditions required for teacher leadership to flourish: supportive principal and colleagues, time for collaborative work, resources, and opportunities for professional development. In its most profound manifestation, teacher leaders influence the practice of teaching in the profession as a whole. Riel and Becker (2008) identified four leadership practices that collectively assist a teacher in moving from individual classroom activities to knowledge-building within the larger profession. Those practices include: learning from one's own teaching; collaborating and sharing responsibility for student success; participating in geographically diverse communities of practice (including regional and national professional organizations and networks); and making personal contributions to the teaching profession. These four domains represent overlapping and interrelated practices. "Referring to someone as a "teacher leader" is a shorthand way of saying that, relative to most other teachers, this individual engages significantly in some combination of these four domains of leadership" (Riel & Becker, p. 399, 2008).   This study sought to determine specific actions of educators (both teachers and school administrators) that were taken

in order to nurture teacher leadership, with the emphasis placed on sharing responsibility for student academic success in a school setting.

Definition of Key Terms

In order to fully understand the parameters of this research, it is necessary that key terminology be defined.

Capacity building: This is the intentional process of mobilizing a school's resources in order to enhance priority outcomes – and sustain those improved outcomes (Crowther, 2011).

Distributed leadership: A leadership style used to build capacity in teachers, distributed leadership advocates that schools 'decenter' the leader so that leadership is more fluid. It includes the utilization of multiple sources of guidance and direction and is made coherent through a common culture of collaboration and collegiality.

Parallel leadership: As defined by Crowther et al. (2002), parallel leadership is a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action to build school capacity. It embodies mutual respect, shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression.

Principal: A principal is a member of the school's building leadership team who is responsible for the supervision of faculty and staff. Assistant principals are included in this category.

Professional development: Professional development includes both building-wide and school district-wide educational programs and in-service sessions provided for professional staff as a professional learning experience. These sessions may be conducted with small groups of teachers, entire buildings, or may be with a combination of teachers from across the school district.

Professional learning community: A professional learning community is a model of school functioning which is characterized by a shared mission, vision, and values; collective inquiry; collaborative teams; an orientation toward action and a willingness to experiment; commitment to continuous improvement; and a focus on results (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

Teacher: A teacher is a certificated professional educator who is currently a member of the school's faculty. Included under the "teacher" umbrella are school counselors, nurses, or any other professional staff member.

Teacher leader: Teachers who take on roles and responsibilities beyond the classroom, either formally or informally, and are influential in improving educational practice are considered teacher leaders.

Teacher leadership: Poekert (2012) defines teacher leadership as the means by which credible teachers exercise formal or informal influence over other members of the school community through collaborative relationships that improve teaching and learning practices. The concept is built on the power of teachers to shape educational practice and institutions.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This qualitative research may be limited in a number of ways. It was conducted in three public secondary schools within the same geographic region of the country. Therefore, the ability to generalize this study to other regions may be limited. This study was contained to professional staff members who were working during the 2016-2017 school year.

Although the selection of the three public secondary schools may be somewhat of a convenience sample, I specifically sought schools having a principal and at least two or three teachers who can be identified as having the attitudes, beliefs, and values associated with teacher

leadership. In order to identify those professionals, all principals and teachers in the school were asked to complete the "Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership Perceptions" (Appendix A) developed by Crowther et al. (2009). Surveys were scored with the accompanying "Scoring Protocol for the Self-Survey" (Appendix B) in order to identify the teacher leaders and to ensure the principal also held those beliefs.

Once identified, a multisite case study research approach was used with the three or four professionals (two or three teachers and one principal) from each of the three public secondary schools. The interview technique was used to gather data from the participants in each case study. Also, data from observations of teachers acting in a leadership capacity were analyzed. As with any research design, the multisite case study approach has strengths and limitations. The case study is anchored in real-life situations and results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). It offers insights and illuminates meanings from which readers can extrapolate meanings. Certain limitations are also evident in the case study research approach. For example, although rich, thick description and analysis of a phenomenon may be desired, a researcher may not have the time or the resources to devote to such an undertaking (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, the study may be limited by the sensitivity and integrating of the investigator. Since I was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, I might have placed my own interpretations on the data collected.

Also, the study may not have controlled the possibility of contamination of the interview responses due to respondents talking with one another. The ability to isolate the interviewees was beyond my capabilities, possibly leading to an impact on the responses given.

The primary source of data for this study was collected in the form of surveys, individual interviews, and observations. Yin (2009) suggests the strengths of interviews are that they are

targeted, focusing directly on the case study topics, and insightful, providing perceived causal inferences and explanations. However, Yin (2009) also acknowledges that interviews may contain the following weaknesses: bias due to poorly articulated questions; response bias; inaccuracies due to poor recall; and reflexivity – interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear.

In this study, teachers were first surveyed to determine those with the potential for teacher leadership. Self-surveys may be an integral component of qualitative and case study research since they provide the researcher with the person's personal perspective. Of those scoring in the appropriate level, a purposeful sampling was selected in order to provide a variety of viewpoints taking into account such differences as subject area taught, years of teaching experience, years teaching in that school, gender, ethnicity, formal and informal roles. Additionally, interviews of principals of those schools were conducted to help determine their vantage point of those teachers identified as teacher leaders. This information assisted in triangulating data to ensure validity.

Finally, I attempted to avoid bias by remaining open to any contrary findings and using critical friends to review the findings throughout the data collection and interpretation phases.

Summary (Significance of the Study)

The primary significance of this study is in its potential to offer school administrators further insight into how to cultivate teacher leadership within their schools or districts. Empowered by their confidence in themselves and their colleagues, teacher leaders may hold the key to improved learning for both students and teachers and may positively impact school reform.

In their inclusive study of teacher leadership over two decades, York-Barr and Duke (2004) clustered the reasons for advancing the concept and practice of teacher leadership into four related categories: benefits of employee participation; expertise about teaching and learning; acknowledgment, opportunities, and rewards for accomplished teachers; and benefits to students (p. 258). In describing each of these categories, the 'benefits of employee participation' includes having additional people to help run the organization, more inclusive perspectives, and having greater ownership and commitment to the goals of the organization. The second category, 'expertise about teaching and learning', acknowledges the expertise of teachers and points to their contributions to educational improvement by sharing their knowledge. The third category is 'acknowledgment, opportunities, and rewards for accomplished teachers.' By acknowledging the expertise and contributions of teachers and by providing opportunities for growth and influence, it is hoped that teacher retention and motivation will increase. The final category, 'benefits to students,' may be the most important one. If more teachers have higher morale, are modeling democratic leadership, and are becoming better in instructional methodology, student achievement should also increase.

Crowther and his colleagues have studied teacher leadership around the globe. Following analysis of five highly credible school capacity-building models, Crowther (2011) strongly asserts that capacity building represents the missing link between school improvement and sustained school success. In charting the leadership pathway for successful school improvement, he attests to capacity building by using parallel leadership (a form of distributed leadership) in order to develop teacher leadership.

Reeves (2008) found that when offered the opportunity to list all of the influences on their professional practices, teachers in his study emphasized other teachers, students, family,

and personal experience over many other presumed influences on their practice. Teachers, therefore, may be more likely to listen to their colleagues in regard to improved instructional practices, thus leading to increased student achievement.

Finally, this study will add to the existing literature related to a form of parallel leadership – hopefully paving the way to a more collaborative and effective approach to school reform. Through the use of parallel leadership, school improvement will be made in the form of student achievement, teacher esteem and morale, and community confidence and appreciation.

While some principals may not wish to share some of the leadership tasks, I would ask both them and teachers to think of this shared leadership through the metaphor of geese flying. Geese fly in a V-formation and they do so for a reason. The lead position is an energy sapping one so the geese take turns being in that spot. They also work cooperatively in order to maintain alignment in order to maximize airlift. Additionally, they take time out to look after injured, weak, or fallen co-travelers. While in the rear of the V-formation, the geese honk to provide encouragement to those up front who are carrying the major burden. The geese constantly alternate places in leading to the final destination, with everyone playing an important role and everyone looking out for each other.

Teachers who develop a deep understanding of teaching but who remain isolated in their classrooms will not affect what is taught or learned in other classrooms. That is, they will only impact student achievement for those students in their classes, rather than having a positive impact, albeit indirectly, on the other students in the school. Effective leadership is needed so that achievement can be enhanced for all students.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In addition to reviewing the current literature on the topic of teacher leadership, this chapter will provide a brief historical perspective of education in the United States. In order to adequately address teacher leadership, the literature available on various forms of shared leadership, teacher leader characteristics, and the effects of teacher leadership will also be submitted.

Overview of the Literature

Historically, public schools in the United States were developed from the factory model. As such, leadership mainly consisted of a hierarchical, bureaucratic approach focused upon top-down control. Early in our nation's educational history, however, Ella Flagg Young, John Dewey's colleague and the first woman to become superintendent of a major American city school system, promoted teacher councils. These councils empowered teachers to share in power and decision-making within their schools (Webb & McCarthy, 1998). While this concept may have been used sporadically in pockets across the country, the teacher council idea has not been fully utilized in its capacity to improve public education.

During the democratic administration movement of the 1940s, all stakeholders – including administrators, teachers, students, and community members – were called to participate in various factions of the school (Koopman et al., 1943). Although Koopman et al. (1943) did not call for administrators to abdicate their positions, they did push for other

stakeholder groups to assist in areas of instruction, as well as in budget, personnel and other "so called administrative problems, all of which have their bearing in instruction" (p.11).

The 1990's brought promise of educational reforms that would transform all schools to high-performing status and would leave no child behind. The trend was to narrow the curriculum and focus with laser-like attention to standardized testing. Educational leaders became (and continue to be) faced with the choice of trying to continue to embrace the corporate model of top-down control or to do the perceived action of relinquishing control by allowing more professional educators to have a voice.

While some similarities do exist between leaders of corporations and leaders of schools, the product of one type of "business" is significantly more important than the other, in my opinion. Corporations determine their successfulness from their quarterly earnings reports – simply, how well their product sold as compared to the cost to make it. Educators, however, look at much more than performance on a standardized test to determine the success of their "business." Presumably every school principal in Pennsylvania would love to receive the highest scores on the Keystone Exams or see his/her school listed as the top performer on the School Performance Profile (SPP), a Pennsylvania state initiative giving feedback as to how well a school is performing. These scores may display intellectual development and growth, but where is the social and emotional development of each child measured? The transformational work of educational leaders is to positively influence all children in more ways than can be measured on a standardized test. Each school is also a microcosm of the surrounding community. Each school should also have an overall positive influence on the surrounding community. How to measure these impacts remains unclear.

As a manner of providing insight, Morgan (2006) uses metaphors. When using the brain as a metaphor to consider organizations, he provides insight in three interconnected ways: as information processing brains; as complex learning systems; and as holographic systems combining centralized and decentralized characteristics.   In considering expanding school leadership to include teachers, the brain seems to be an appropriate metaphor because in brain functioning there is no center or point of control. Data are stored in various parts of the brain simultaneously, with patterns and order emerging from the process. In looking at the school organization as an information processing brain, each aspect of the functioning of this organization depends on information processing in one form or another. Using only a single individual to process all information may cause an organization to be stagnant. Morgan (2006) ponders how one can design complex systems that are capable of learning in a brain-like way. To do so, he suggests that learning organizations develop capacities that allow them to do the following:

- Scan and anticipate change in the wider environment to detect significant variations.

- Develop an ability to question, challenge, and change operating norms and assumptions.

- Allow an appropriate strategic direction and pattern of organization to emerge (p. 87).

Finally, in looking at an organization with the holographic approach, we are invited to think of systems where qualities of the whole are enfolded in all the parts so that the system has an ability to self-organize and regenerate itself on a continuous basis (p. 97). Diffusing leadership in the ways presented through the brain metaphor would help the functioning of the learning organization.

During the 2004-2005 academic year, faculty and department leaders from a variety of universities and organizations in the United States and Canada launched a new movement in the

field of educational leadership. The New DEEL (Democratic-Ethical Educational Leadership) desires to change the direction of our field away from an overly corporate model toward the values of democracy and ethical behavior. Their focus is on creating a different type of educational leader from those in the corporate mold including a new set of skills as well as a broader definition of leadership itself. The skills and values of the New DEEL leaders stand in contrast to the characteristics promoted by the accountability movement as illustrated below (Gross, 2006; Gross & Shapiro, 2016; Gross & Shapiro, 2015; Gross & Shapiro, 2014).

New DEEL Vision for Leaders	Behavior of Traditional School Leaders
Transformational	*Transactional*
Guided by inner sense of Responsibility to students, faculty, staff, families, the community and social development on a world scale.	Driven by an exterior pressure of accountability to those above in the organizational/political hierarchy.
Leads from an expansive community-building perspective. A democratic actor who understands when and how to *shield* the school from turbulence and when and how to *use* turbulence to facilitate change.	Bound by the system and the physical building. A small part of the monolithic, more corporate structure.
Integrates the concepts of democracy, social justice and school reform through scholarship, dialogue and action.	Separates democracy and social justice from guiding vision and accepts school improvement (a subset of school reform) as the dominant perspective.
Operates from a deep understanding of ethical decision-making in the context of a dynamic, inclusive, democratic vision.	Operates largely from perspective of the ethic of justice wherein obedience to authority and current regulations is largely unquestioned despite one's own misgivings.

Sees one's career as a calling and has a well-developed sense of mission toward democratic social improvement that cuts across political, national, class, gender, racial, ethnic, and religious boundaries.	Sees one's career in terms of specific job titles with an aim to move to ever greater positions of perceived power within the current system's structure.

The transformational theory of educational leadership supports change in the operation of schools across our country. Support of the concept of teacher leadership blends well with this new operational concept for school improvement. It is important to note, however, that leaders may not function in a way that is totally transformational or totally transactional. It is appropriate to consider the points as being on opposite ends of a continuum. Depending upon the circumstances involved, educational leaders may operate somewhere between the two points. As we try to move leaders to the transformational operational position, we need to understand that getting there is a journey and situations may cause a leader to return, at times, to his/her more comfortable transactional response.

Teacher Leadership

Although a relatively new topic, much has been written on teacher leadership within the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Teacher leadership is evident in both formal and informal roles. Some more traditional forms of leadership include mentors, team or department leaders, or union representatives. More current practices are often more informal and include coaching peers, modeling reflective practice, or working in small groups or teams with colleagues. Based upon their extensive research, York-Barr and Duke (2004) developed domains of teacher leadership practice including formal and informal leadership roles as well as instructional, professional development, and organizational functions. These domains of practice

are categorized as coordination and management, school or district curriculum work, professional development of colleagues, participation in school change and improvement initiatives, parent and community involvement, contributions to the profession of teachers, and pre-service teacher education.

Leadership should not be limited to a select group of teachers. Inclusion of only a few teachers in leadership roles sends a negative message to others. A better model is the involvement of all teachers as leaders in the complex and unpredictable process of school reform. Teachers should be encouraged to see leadership as a continuum of roles from which they can select, given their own experience, confidence level, skills, and knowledge. Teacher leadership roles may vary as much as do schools (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996).

Contributing to the body of research on the teacher leadership topic, Danielson (2006) emphasized the importance of excelling in classroom teaching before one could aspire to lead fellow teachers, a point also asserted by Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996). She described nine leadership dispositions that tend to define teacher leaders, including traits such as creativity, confidence, courage, and a deep commitment to students.

In the past, teacher leaders were those holding formal positions, such as department chair or team leader. Although those formal teacher leader roles still exist, more teachers lead informally by revealing their classroom practice, sharing their expertise, asking questions of colleagues, mentoring new teachers, and modeling how teachers collaborate on issues of practice (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006). Successful teacher leaders stay true to their beliefs about teaching and learning, couple confidence with humility in their practice, and continually work with colleagues to improve student learning.

Although many authors discuss the importance of teacher leadership and describe it, the definitions vary. This lack of definition may be due to the large umbrella of roles and responsibilities covered by this term. Definitions by some of the most prominent writers follow. As early as 1996, teacher leadership was defined by Katzenmeyer and Moller as the following: Teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, influence others toward improved educational practice, and identify with and contribute to a community of teacher leaders.

York-Barr and Duke defined teacher leadership as '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' (2004, pp. 287-288). In this definition, teacher leadership is built on a vision of influence and interaction, rather than power and authority. It aligns well with any type of distributed, shared, or collective leadership (Poekert, 2012).

Crowther et al. (2002, 2009) define the teacher leader concept in this manner. "Teacher leadership is about action that transforms teaching and learning in a school, that ties school and community together on behalf of learning, and that advances social sustainability and quality of life for a community" (p. xvii). Furthermore, they believe that teacher leadership is an ethical stance that is based on views of both a better world and the power of teachers to shape meaning systems. It manifests in new forms of understanding and practice that contribute to school success and to the quality of life of the community in the long term (p. 10, 2009).

In combining various areas of research, Poekert (2012) explains teacher leadership as the means by which credible teachers exercise formal or informal influence over supervisors, colleagues, and members of the school community through collaborative relationships that

improve teaching and learning practices. He sees the focus of the teacher leader's influence on

the improvement of instructional practice and student performance, making the connection that

effective teacher leadership is effective professional development. In essence, Poekert views

teacher leaders as school-based professional developers.

Characteristics of Teacher Leaders

The research is rich in describing characteristics of those identified as teacher leaders. In

reviewing research available through 2004, York-Barr and Duke noted that 'teachers who lead

are respected as teachers by their colleagues and administrators. They assume a learning

orientation in their work and demonstrate or are viewed as having the potential to develop

leadership knowledge, skills, and dispositions' (2004, p. 289). They are or have been teachers

with significant teaching experience, are known to be excellent teachers, and are respected by

their peers.

The power of teacher leaders comes from the strength of their influencing skills. Among

the sources of power for having influence are personal characteristics and expertise. Teachers

must be prepared to be effective in influencing others (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996).

In her study of 81 exemplary secondary school teachers across the United States,

Collinson (2012) found that teachers are learners first, leaders second. It was through their love

of learning that leadership qualities arose. Activities that allowed them to learn by leading

included team teaching, finding external support within the community, changing schools,

observing colleagues, serving on committees, participating in professional organizations, and

providing professional development. In addition to modeling pedagogical excellence, exemplary

teachers in her study shared the same attitudes: commitment to education, a love of learning,

doing one's best, curiosity, and open-mindedness. Additionally, participants shared another virtue, humility. Humility means that the teachers recognize that they can learn from everyone and every experience, that taking risks and making mistakes can be a way to learn, that asking for help is necessary, and that integration and refinement of attitudes and skills is a lifelong process (p. 263). While Collinson may have found that teachers are leaders second to being learners, it seems appropriate to assume that all teachers are leaders in some respect due to the influence they exert on others, specifically their students.

In her dissertation, Ault (2009) identified important characteristics of teacher leaders from her research in an urban literacy program. These characteristics included the ability to build personal relationships, the desire to share the leadership role with peer teachers, and the ability to problem-solve through periods of conflicting demands.

Viewpoints of head teachers and principals from both the United Kingdom and the United States (Boes & Halsall, 2009) supported the literature and listed the following characteristics of teacher leaders: teaching experience; leadership in curriculum development; competence for leadership roles; broad interest in all aspects of the school environment; acceptance of criticism and ability to make changes; good practitioner/competence in one's discipline; cooperation in working with others; and balance in life. Boes and Halsall (2009) further identify the skills of teacher leaders as: good interpersonal ability; professionalism; organization; good communication skills; involvement in goal setting for the school; ability to effect change; good decision-making ability; self-management of time, resources, and duties; motivational skills; support for others; and flexibility in teaching and teaching techniques.

Reason and Reason (2011) seek to construct a new vision of teacher leadership, one that is more positive than the negative language that permeates our world regarding education. They identified ten (10) mental images to represent ten types of teacher leaders that exist.

- The Learning Advocate – These teacher leaders' actions and priorities revolve around one ultimate mission: learning. They work toward the continuous improvement of learning conditions in their schools, seek to maximize learning for their students, and make decisions that impact student learning.

- The Believer – These passionate teacher leaders believe in their students, colleagues, parents, and the community. They believe in the lofty aspirations of their profession and are proud of the fact that they teach. They exude a deep sense of hope, courage, and patience.

- The Transformationalist – This is a teacher leader with an acute capacity to visualize, articulate, and them implement an ambitious, inspiring, and transformative vision for change. They can see things the way they are then visualize with clarity better outcomes on the horizon and the pathway needed to get there.

- The Synergizer – The gifts of the Synergizer involve the capacity to develop and nurture professional networks of support and influence both locally and beyond. They can mold a group into a team. Synergizers have the capacity to connect with others and they build networks to call upon whenever needed to supply energy, expertise, and a fresh approach.

- The Method Master – This teacher leader is exceptional in the art and science of selecting, learning, and applying research-based, best-practice instructional methods. They are willing to share their knowledge to improve the profession by helping others enhance their professional practice.

- The Fully Invested Owner – These are teachers who are totally committed to the teaching profession – their students, colleagues, and school. They view each day in the classroom as an opportunity to ignite the human potential. Fully Invested Owners believe that deep change is their job and spend their days seeking solutions and innovation rather than assigning blame.

- The Present Balance Keeper – These teacher leaders understand the concept of time and know that investments in themselves will allow them to serve others more effectively and for a longer period of time. They acknowledge that the challenges of the profession should inspire and engage, not engulf you. In scanning for growth opportunities, Present Balance Keepers will shed practices, viewpoints, and approaches that aren't working and replace them with new tools better suited to move forward.

- The Servant – This is a teacher leader who leads by supporting and developing others. Servants stay in touch with the needs of their colleagues and support them in their capacity to reflect on their current contributions and future opportunities for growth and improvement. During toxic times, they fall back on the service mentality which puts the focus on serving the needs of others.

- The Inquisitor – These are the teachers who inspire their students, their colleagues, and themselves with thoughtful, strategic, purposeful, and emotionally bound questions. They break the debilitating impact of "groupthink," which occurs when our familiarity with one another causes us to bring our thoughts, ideas, habits and beliefs into alignment to such a degree that we begin to lack the diversity of perspective.

- The Detective – The Detective is one who can spot untapped creativity and potential in their students and colleagues alike and help bring forth and nurture those hidden talents. If information is needed, they know how to draw it out.

In considering these ten diverse types of teacher leaders described by Reason and Reason (2011), it is evident that most, if not all, teachers can be positive leaders within the school setting. These descriptors align with those of others in the field; however, Reason and Reason (2011) describe the roles in very specific and positive ways. Leadership can be apparent in numerous ways, allowing opportunities for all to step into those positions should they so choose.

Drawing on qualitative studies of teacher leaders in schools in Maine, Fairman and Mackenzie (2012) found that teacher leaders were internally motivated to expand their professional knowledge and skills and they understood the need to engage in professional learning in order to improve student learning.

In his book *Staying Centered: Curriculum Leadership in a Turbulent Era,* one of the schools Gross (1998) studied was the A. L. Burruss Elementary School in Marietta, Georgia. Among other accolades, Burruss exemplified the concept of shared governance. Principal Jerry Locke and his teachers believed that meaningful change comes from within the schools themselves, not from the outside. While the group had their instructional content shaped by the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum, the teachers were creative in how to deliver it, offering various instructional ideas to others. In working in a shared governance setting, teachers gathered information and reported back to their work group. The principal made it clear that questioning and debates were acceptable and safe.

In a follow up with Burruss and other schools in his initial study, Gross (2004) identified seven common qualities of effective shared governance that were evident regardless of the level of school (elementary, middle, or high).

1. **Responsibilities tied directly to reform**.

2. **Frequent meetings**. All must understand and be willing to commit to giving up some of their free time for meetings in order for shared governance to be effective.

3. **Dynamic communication**. Participants must regularly communicate with constituencies in order to avoid misunderstandings.

4. **Annual goals**. Highly valued and authentic learning goals must be used.

5. **Frameworks or constitutions**. Although the document may evolve, it is the central framework from which the life of the organization flows.

6. **Wide, boundary-crossing participation**.

7. **Inclusive organizing**. Bringing staff, students, parents, and community members into the decision making circle helps bring different perspectives together.

Gross (2004) clearly delineated what is needed in order for a system of shared governance to be successful.

Distributed Leadership

In discussions about educational reform, the relationship between leadership and school improvement is frequently reviewed. Capacity building is often acknowledged, implying that teacher leaders, either formal or informal, play a crucial role in school improvement initiatives. Distributed leadership is one of the styles utilized to build capacity in schools. This leadership theory advocates that schools 'decenter' the leader so that leadership is more fluid. It

concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization rather than seeking distribution only through formal position or role. Harris (2004) describes distributed leadership as characterized as a form of collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working together, contrasting with traditional notions of leadership which are premised upon an individual managing hierarchical system and structure. Distributed leadership, therefore, means multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture. At its core, distributed leadership is made by a culture of collaboration and collegiality.

Three reasons can be identified as to why distributed leadership is helpful in providing conceptual clarity regarding teacher leadership (Muijs & Harris, 2003). First, it incorporates the activities of multiple groups of individuals in a school who work at guiding and mobilizing staff in the instructional change process. Second, it implies a social distribution of leadership where the leadership function is stretched over the work of a number of individuals and where the leadership task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders. Third, it implies interdependency rather than dependency, embracing how leaders of various kinds and in various roles share responsibility (p. 440).

To support the reasons of importance of teacher leadership identified by Muijs and Harris (2003), one should consider the work of Gross' (2014) turbulence theory as it pertains to education. While beginning with a pilot's understanding of turbulence, Gross relates turbulence as an educational theory with generic definitions as follows:

Degree of Turbulence	General Definition
Light	Associated with ongoing issues, little or no disruption in normal work environment, subtle signs of stress

Moderate	Widespread awareness of the issue, specific origins
Severe	Fear for the entire enterprise, possibility of large-scale community demonstrations, a feeling of crisis
Extreme	Structural damage to the institution's normal operation is occurring

Perhaps more important in understanding this theory is understanding how it can be used to enhance positive educational change. Turbulence theory is enhanced by including the concepts of positionality, cascading, and stability (Gross, 2014). At the most basic level, positionality, as developed in the turbulence theory, takes into consideration the relative situation of individuals in the organization in a multidimensional fashion. For example, in a public secondary school, your view of turbulence may be impacted by whether you are a student, a new teacher, an experienced teacher, an English teacher, an art teacher, an administrator, male, female, a custodian, a secretary, etc. Cascading, again in the most basic description, is a matter of understanding context and the force of a series of turbulent conditions. As water cascades, it picks up speed. As a series of turbulent events occur, the level of turbulence may also quickly increase. Stability appears to be a relationship between the object examined and the dynamic force(s) confronting it. Viewing distributed leadership as a positive educational concept, one would be wise to include teacher leaders, as well as other school personnel, in order to increase the "positionality." That is, the situations dealt with could be viewed through many different lenses.

In order for distributed leadership to be successful, much depends on the internal conditions, which are often set by the formal leadership, to support and nurture collaborative

learning and to harness the leadership energy that results (Harris 2004). Thus, although it

presumes active involvement at all levels, the question is raised as to whether this type of

leadership is then really 'top-down' since it depends heavily on the formal leadership of the

organization.

Parallel Leadership

Parallel leadership differs slightly from other forms of shared leadership. Parallel

leadership, as defined by Crowther et al. (2002), is a process whereby teacher leaders and their

principals engage in collective action to build school capacity. It embodies mutual respect,

shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression. Even use of the term "parallel"

suggests that harmony, single direction, alignment, and mutuality exist.

To further their cause, Crowther et al. (2002) say this about parallel leadership.

In summary, parallel leadership engages teacher leaders and administrators in collaborative action while, at the same time, encouraging fulfillment of their individual capabilities, aspirations, and responsibilities. It leads to strengthened alignment between the school's vision and the school's teaching, learning, and assessment practices. It facilitates professional learning, culture building, and schoolwide approaches to pedagogy. It makes possible the enhancement of school identity, teachers' professional esteem, community support, and students' achievements. (p. 42)

The parallel leadership pathway is a human pathway. As such, it is marked by profound

human values – deep trust, shared purpose, and explicit allowance for the expression of

individual talents and values. It is a pathway that is grounded in a concern for social and

ecological sustainability. Thus, it is a pathway for future generations, not just those treading it

today (Crowther, p. 169, 2011).

In providing a conceptual model of parallel leadership, Crowther et al. (2009)

summarized their years of research as follows.

In essence, to enhance a school's effectiveness necessitates a three-pronged strategy by a committed professional community over an extensive period of time (two years or more, in our case studies). That is, the school's professionals must engage in shared learning, focused reflection, and in-depth problem-solving while refining and deepening the school's culture and identity and simultaneously designing and implementing school-specific pedagogical principles and associated strategies. (p. 59)

Parallel leadership is not necessarily a style of leadership and cannot be defined as one. While the individuals comprising the team may each have a preferred leadership style (e.g., strategic, transformational, democratic, etc.), the team will actually draw upon each of those leadership styles, as well as the individual personalities of each team member, to achieve the common goal. Therefore, parallel leadership has multiple variations in practice just as the multiple people and schools comprising the parallel leadership teams (Crowther et al., 2009). While the styles may vary however, the three key components of parallelism must be included to be a parallel leadership team: mutual trust, a sense of shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression.

Effects of Teacher Leadership

Teachers who lead could have a profound effect on the quality of schools, influencing the schools themselves and defining innovative leadership in the 21st century. However, while teachers may be outstanding facilitators of student learning, that is not always the case when it comes to teaching colleagues. The historical isolation of teaching and the demands on teachers' time may be somewhat responsible, but it is important for teachers to model for others and help colleagues develop skills and understanding. When teachers step out of their acceptable pattern of quiet acquiescence and take the risk of advocating for what they believe is best for students, however, colleagues may see them as rude, disloyal, or worse (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006).

This leadership can only come from teachers who "tell the truth" and who accept the vulnerability that results from doing so (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006).

Muijs and Harris (2003) have identified specific areas in which teacher leadership has demonstrated a positive effective. First, the concept of teacher leadership is powerful because it is premised upon the creation of collegial norms in schools that evidence has shown contribute directly to school effectiveness, improvement, and development. Second, the idea is powerful because it recognizes that teachers' ability to lead has a significant influence upon the quality of relationships and teaching within the school. Third, teacher leadership potentially offers a 'new professionalism' based upon mutual trust, recognition, empowerment, and support. Finally, teacher leadership reclaims school leadership from the individual to the collective, from the singular to the plural and offers the real possibility of distributed leadership in action (pp. 444-445).

York-Barr and Duke (2004), in summarizing the findings of their literature review, found that 'the most consistently documented positive effects of teacher leadership are on the teacher leaders themselves, supporting the belief that leading and learning are interrelated. Teacher leaders grow in their understanding of instructional, professional, and organizational practice as they lead. Less empirical evidence supports student, collegial, and school-level effects' (p. 288).

Taking a slightly different perspective, Poekert (2012) believes that teacher leadership is essentially a form of job-embedded professional development. In these days when the financial situation of schools is deteriorating, his suggestion is that schools would be wiser to target resources toward the development of teacher leaders. This investment, he believes, would 'provide not only short-term gains in student achievement scores, it can also provide lasting

gains in schools' capacity to learn and adapt to the dynamic circumstances and issues they face each year' (p. 186).

The research suggests that the success of distributed leadership within a school can be influenced by a number of interpersonal factors, such as relationships with other teachers and school administrators. The importance of these interpersonal relationships is evident especially since school management may in some cases feel threatened by teachers taking on what is presumed to be the leadership roles of the principal. Without the interpersonal relationships, estrangement among teachers can occur. Despite a wealth of school improvement literature advocating more collaborative, democratic and distributed forms of leadership, clear links with improved student outcomes have yet to be established (Harris, 2004). Without evidence of improved student outcomes, distributed leadership can at least encourage schools to operate more openly and encourage teachers to work more collaboratively.

Nurturing Teacher Leadership

Although research on teacher leadership is growing, there is little systematic research to guide educators with practical information regarding how to help teacher and principal roles in this evolution. It is not yet clear which teachers become teacher leaders, how they both identify and develop these professional skills in themselves, and then how they foster these skills among other teachers. Growth from teacher to teacher leader evolves over time and depends upon the mentoring and coaching not just of the building leader, but of their peers, who slowly accept them in these roles (Baecher, 2012).

Whether and how teachers decide to lead is determined by what they believe and who they are. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) refer to teacher leaders as sleeping giants. "This

sleeping giant can be awakened by helping teachers believe they are leaders, by offering

opportunities to develop their leadership skills, and by providing school cultures that honor their

leadership" (p. 2). But teachers can influence others either positively or negatively toward new

ideas. A charge of the principal is to acknowledge the power of influence and provide teachers

with opportunities to use their power towards positive actions for the school and students. They

also offer specific guidelines for principals in cultivating teacher leadership. Those guidelines

include:

- For those teachers lacking confidence, listen, support them, and remove barriers.
- Offer teachers chances to develop professionally.
- Let people know you accept teacher leaders.
- Provide incentives. (p. 19-20)

Crowther et al. (2002) site four conditions necessary for the development of teacher

leaders:

- Public and professional acceptance of the existence of teacher leaders in the profession and in the schools.
- Active support of principals and system administrators. Where teacher leadership has begun to flourish, principals have actively supported it or, at least, encouraged it.
- Greater development of teachers' roles in school reform and revitalization.
- Acknowledgement that teacher leadership produces positive school outcomes. (pp. 33-34)

These findings are consistent with those of Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) who listed

measurable characteristics of schools in which teacher leadership is the norm:

- Developmental focus: Teachers are supported in learning new knowledge and skills. They are encouraged to facilitate the learning of others.
- Recognition: Teachers are respected and recognized for their professional roles and the contributions they make.
- Autonomy: Teachers are encouraged to take the initiative to make improvements.
- Collegiality: Teachers collaborate on instructional and student-related matters.
- Participation: Teachers are actively involved in making decisions and contributing to important matters.
- Open communication: Teachers "send" and "receive" communication in open, honest ways at their school.

- Positive environment: Teachers experience a positive climate and effective administrative leadership. (p. 58-59)

In summarizing their review of the literature, York-Barr and Duke (2004) found that the teacher leadership preparation literature suggests that both formal training, such as university coursework or district-based professional development, and job-embedded support, such as coaching by principals or other administrators, are important elements for development (p. 282). One of the strongest themes was the emergence of leadership that is fostered in learning communities as well as the need for administrator support. They prescribe the process for effectively using teacher leadership for school improvement as utilizing the following steps.

- Schools and districts must clearly articulate student learning and school improvement goals and related priorities for development and action.
- Possible ways in which teachers can lead efforts related to goal accomplishment must be generated, recognizing that specific leadership functions and needs that are well served by teachers are fluid, meaning they are likely to change and evolve as improvement goals and emphases change.
- The unique and varied leadership capacities of individual teachers must be matched with unique and varied leadership functions.
- Conversations about the purpose of and expectations for the varied leadership work must be held among formal and informal leaders and with school faculties.
- Schools must identify supports that can advance the leadership work of teachers.
- Regular opportunities to obtain feedback and to reflect on progress that is being made toward goal accomplishment must be embedded in program planning. (pp. 290-291)

In order for teacher leadership to flourish, efforts must be made by both the teachers and the principals. In the 20th century, principals maintained the majority of leadership roles in the school. As the 21st century progresses, however, more leadership roles are being turned over to teacher leaders, albeit still with the approval of the principal. A variety of 'ingredients' on the part of both the teacher and the school leader may lead to the growth of teacher leadership. These ingredients must be supplied by both parties, for if the teacher has many of them, but the school leader does not, leadership will be suppressed; if, on the other hand, the school leader has many of these qualities but does not have teachers who fit the descriptors, so too will leadership

fail to grow. In studying the development of teacher leaders, Baecher (2012) summarized these

ingredients for development as involving a host of organizational, cultural, interpersonal, and

personal characteristics (p. 321). These ingredients are listed in the table that follows.

	The teacher…	The principal/school leader…
Personal qualities	Shows initiative, desire, interest	Is supportive, confident in a vision of teachers as leaders
Interpersonal	Is collegial, liked, admired	Is able to encourage teachers to take on new roles
Knowledge	Brings expertise or specialized knowledge	Sees teachers in building as resources
Situational	Is placed in high contact with colleagues	Provides time for collaboration
Opportunities	Is empowered to make decisions	Practices shared decision making
Orientation	Embraces innovation	Engenders innovation

Research suggests that the nurturing of teacher leadership is a function that most school

principals will embrace enthusiastically because of its potential to contribute to the maturation of

the teaching profession and as a result of its links to school capacity building (Crowther et al.,

2002).   Seven challenges are presented to principals.

- Communicate strategic intent. To nurture teacher leadership, principals need to be unambiguous about their strategic intent.
- Incorporate the aspirations and views of others. When senior executives draw on the ideas and energy of colleagues from throughout their organizations, they not only engender more creative solutions but also build trust and commitment that they can call on in the future.
- Pose difficult-to-answer questions. Posing difficult-to-answer questions makes clear to the professional community of the school, and also to the wider community, that taking an informed stance on an issue is valued.

- Make space for individual innovation. The political and personal skills that are required to overcome institutional obstacles appear to be most easily learned in environments where trust, security, and confidence are present.
- Know when to step back. In developing the capacity to step back, principals should keep in mind that leadership may be a less visible phenomenon when it is vested in several people instead of one.
- Create opportunities from perceived difficulties. Where leadership is distributed and held together by trust and shared purpose, errors and difficulties can often be transposed into educational opportunities. An environment of no blame must be created.
- Build on achievements to create a culture of success. (pp. 52-62)

The manner in which teacher leaders work with their colleagues is crucial to success for any school reform. As teacher leaders learn some hard lessons about the difficulty of both supporting and critiquing, they develop solid interpersonal skills and overcome inhibitions as they uncover their own and others' leadership (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006). Not to be overlooked, Reeves' (2008) findings are that the single greatest influence on the professional practices of teachers is the direct observation of other teachers.

There is also the impact that teacher unions/associations play in the school systems. While teacher associations may help to influence policy on the national and state levels, whether or not they support the development of individual teacher leaders within the school setting is uncertain. While teacher associations may try to grow leaders from their ranks, unfortunately that leadership often seems to attempt to create a more adversarial relationship on a building level rather than supporting growth of teacher leaders for academic and student-centered purposes.

Crowther and colleagues (2002) advance the concept of parallel leadership in which teachers assume primary responsibility for leading improvement in teaching and learning and principals assume primary responsibility for strategic leadership, involving alignment of resources to support improvements in teaching and learning. In this type of leadership model, according to the authors, principals engage in the following, often new, roles: linking the

development work in schools with an inspiring image of a preferred future; generating an

identity that promotes creation of cultural meaning; aligning organizational elements that foster

the holistic implementation of school-based innovations; distributing power and leadership so as

to encourage teachers (and community members) to view themselves as important in shaping the

school's direction and values; and forming external alliances and networks to allow schools to

collaborate with other schools and with the broader community.

In offering parameters in the development of teacher leadership, Reeves (2008)

developed the New Framework for Teacher Leadership. Seven areas are included in this

framework.

1. Recognition of challenge – must be transformed from an event into a process. Don't wait
   for the annual autopsy of state test scores for a moment of recognition.
2. Research by teachers and leaders – encourages action research by practicing teachers as it
   lends relevance and credibility to the body of educational research that is already present.
3. Results in a public forum for students, schools, and systems – For research to have
   meaning for teachers, results must be compelling, transparent, and public.
4. Reflection – No matter what works in theory, the actual implementation of effective
   practice depends on providing teachers with the opportunity to reflect on research and
   consider the personal and professional implications of compelling research findings.
5. Reinforcement – Reinforcement depends on consistent feedback about student
   achievement, professional practices, and leadership decision making.
6. Rejection
7. Resilience and a sustained network of professional excellence- desired response to any
   research results. (pp. 28-45)

In summarizing their findings, Swanson et al. (2011) indicate that three things are needed

in order to maximize the contributions of teacher leaders. First, they need institutional support.

Principals must create structures and time for teachers to collaborate and foster productive social

relations and a culture of critical reflection. Second, they need professional development. The

growing reliance on teachers to lead instructional improvement suggests a need to be more

intentional in preparing future teacher leaders. Finally, they need professional learning

communities. Within those professional learning communities, teacher leaders can connect with

their peers as they critically examine practice, provide feedback and obtain feedback, and reflect on progress (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Analyzing case studies of teacher leaders, Swanson et al. (2011) found ten critical issues that frequently influence the professional lives of teacher leaders.

- **Building support among administrators**. Teacher leaders need to cultivate administrators' support to ensure that school and district policies do not conflict with or undermine their work.
- **Defining roles and responsibilities and straddling roles**. New leadership positions are often experimental, lack job descriptions, and often lack authority. Too often teacher leaders find themselves taking on roles and responsibilities beyond what they expected their jobs to be. Role confusion, especially for those spanning established teacher and administrator roles, can create tension for teacher leaders as well as for those they are expected to lead.
- **Dealing with resistance**. In any new reform, resistance from some faction is inevitable. Learning to work with resistant colleagues (or administrators) is essential for teacher leaders.
- **Developing new expertise.** Teachers who become leaders are known for their expertise in some aspect of their work, be it in subject matter knowledge, assessment practices, or relationships with students. However, in their leadership work, new knowledge and skills are needed to be effective in new roles, such as mentoring colleagues, facilitating teacher teams, acquiring resources (grant writing), or working with new constituents. The learning curve for acquiring these additional skills is often steep, with little time or support to become proficient.
- **Building and sustaining commitment to change.** With the constant swing of the reform pendulum, teacher leaders often struggle to build a critical mass for change. Teachers are often asked to implement new practices before they are proficient in using new knowledge and skills.
- **Coping with the isolation that comes with changing roles**. No longer a classroom teacher but not an administrator either, they struggle to find a professional community for support. Teacher leaders often long for a mentor to guide them in their new role.
- **Establishing and maintaining credibility.** Teachers can only be leaders if others choose to follow. Credibility has to be earned by demonstrating expertise, establishing trust, and getting results. Establishing credibility and legitimacy as a leader is often difficult in a profession known for its egalitarian norms.
- **Learning the politics**. Taking on new roles requires teacher leaders to understand new power structures, interpersonal dynamics, and political processes that may be foreign, yet critical to their success.
- **Advocating for others/causes**. Teacher leaders often find themselves in an advocacy role, either fighting for programs or practices they believe in or trying to support others who feel strongly about continuing practices that work.
- **Handling the workload.** Overload is a common problem for teacher leaders, especially those who are still full-time teachers. (pp. 20-21)

Structural changes within schools that are required in order to cultivate teacher leadership include time and professional development (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Time can be used for teachers to meet to plan and discuss issues such as curriculum matters, developing school-wide plans, leading study groups, organizing visits to other schools, and collaborating with others. Professional development is needed with a focus on specific aspects of the teachers' leadership roles. Often times, when exceptional teachers move into a leadership position, administrators assume they have the necessary leadership skills of these roles regardless of whether or not they have had previous training or experience relevant to the new expectations (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009 as found in Swanson et al., 2011). Additionally, teacher leadership seems to operate best where high degrees of trust are evident (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Involving teachers in leadership that includes collaborative teams and action can develop trust, as it allows positive relationships to develop.

In an interview study of ten purposively sampled British schools (five elementary, five secondary), Muijs and Harris (as cited in Poekert, 2012) identified ten factors that influenced the emergence and maintenance of teacher leadership:

> (1) supportive culture, (2) supportive structures, (3) strong leadership …, (4) commitment to action enquiry and data richness, (5) innovative forms of professional development, (6) coordinated improvement efforts, (7) high levels of teacher participation and involvement, (8) collective creativity, (9) shared professional practice, [and] (10) recognition and reward (Muijs and Harris 2006, p. 967, as cited in Poekert, 2012, p. 178).

Muijs and Harris (2007) also noted that their study found that in schools where teacher leadership was most successful, attempts had been made to provide recognition and rewards for teachers' efforts, either formally or informally.

Although Muijs and Harris (2007) found that shared vision, trust, communication, and school culture were important in the promotion of teacher leadership, the need to have someone

to turn to was also evident. "There was a strong sense among teachers that while they appreciated being involved in leadership, they needed to have a clear view of who to turn to for the support on certain decisions" (p. 119).

In promoting teacher leaders, the role of the building principal must also evolve. The principal must become a talent scout, constantly on the prowl for effective practice. Rather than policing compliance and meticulously identifying what teachers do wrong, administrators who support teacher leadership must relentlessly "catch teachers doing something right" and view that as an essential part of their daily activities (Reeves, 2008).

Findings from the studies by Fairman and Mackenzie (2012) let administrators know that they must provide professional development that is meaningful to teachers and better supports their focus on student learning. It also needs to prepare teachers to communicate and work effectively with others in their school community. For example, in addition to curriculum and instruction, professional development must also assist teachers with their leadership skills in areas such as facilitation, active listening, and conflict resolution. Additionally, administrators must work with teachers in creating a climate where teachers can freely lead, formally and informally, rather than imposing leadership on them.

In drawing evidence from the International Teacher Leadership project, which has partners in fifteen (15) diverse countries, Frost (2012) strongly asserts that teachers can lead innovation, build professional knowledge, develop their leadership capacity, and influence colleagues and practice in their schools, provided that they have the appropriate support structures and strategies. The key dimension of a strategy for innovation in which non-positional teacher leadership is pivotal is continuing professional development that focuses on teacher leadership.

As educators move through this era of high stakes testing, it may seem contradictory to espouse the cultivation of teacher leaders since it seems top-down school leadership is what is established. On the contrary, I believe it is imperative that teachers share in the process of school reform. Although the national and state governments set established criteria that must be met as evidenced on various standardized assessments, teachers can assist building and district administrators in developing and implementing strategies to increase academic success. Teachers are also crucial in developing relationships with students and assisting in their social and emotional growth, as well as their academic performance. As the African proverb indicates, "It takes a village to raise a child."

Obstacles/Barriers to teacher leadership

In their extensive research, Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) found several recurring obstacles to teacher leadership:

- Teachers are still building their self-confidence to be leaders.
- Teachers continue to struggle with concerns about the reactions of peers to their leadership activities.
- Principal must support teacher leaders.
- Organizational constraints – school day, school year, etc.
- The "we/they" mentality pervading the relationships between administrators and teachers is an obstacle to overcome in achieving the full potential of teacher leadership. (pp. 90-92)

Boes and Halsall (2009) also found some of these same barriers as identified through their interviews in both the United Kingdom and the United States. Barriers to teacher leadership that surfaced included: lack of interpersonal skills, confidence, time/resources, ability to accept and make changes, compensation, leadership skills, and training; unwilling to take on responsibility; isolation/fear of being seen as superior to peers; being authoritative; and inability to handle conflict.

"Teachers continue to be reluctant or ambivalent about being regarded as 'leaders', in that they did not want to take on formal titles of leadership and seemed to prefer working through informal channels to effect change" (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012, p. 244). Therefore, labeling the work as 'leadership' may, in fact, discourage teacher involvement in the leadership activity.

Reeves (2008) sheds light on these barriers to improved teacher leadership by citing blame, bureaucracy, and baloney. Blame is described as the evil twin of efficacy. When we blame our present or prospective failure on conditions we cannot influence, then we forfeit efficacy and replace it with the status of victim. To confront blame as a barrier to teacher leadership, teachers must be empowered to ask challenging questions and conduct research to test hypotheses and experiment with alternative strategies (p. 58). Baloney is the unappetizing combination of ingredients including superstition, prejudice, and deeply held convictions, all unburdened by evidence. Real barriers to change do exist, however, and sometimes include time, contracts, policies, and resources. It is suggested that if we replace blame with efficacy, supplant bureaucracy with networks, and give evident power over baloney, we open the doors for the new framework (Reeves, 2008).

Swanson et al. (2011) identified the most common issues that school-based teacher leaders face as trying to resolve the ambiguity that surfaces as they straddle the roles of teacher and leader, needing to build support among administrators to facilitate their work with other teachers, establishing and maintaining credibility among their peers, and managing the workload of extra leadership responsibilities while still teaching full time.

Harris (p. 20, 2004) points out that barriers do exist to distributed leadership. First, it requires those in formal leadership positions to relinquish power to others. Second, the 'top-

down' approaches to leadership and the internal school structures offer significant impediments to the development of distributed leadership. Finally and most importantly, distributed leadership poses the major challenge of *how* to distribute development responsibility and authority and more importantly *who* distributes responsibility and authority. Distributed leadership implies interdependency rather than dependency, embracing the ways in which leaders of various kinds and in various roles share responsibility.

The importance of the principal-teacher relationship cannot be overlooked. Barnett and McCormick (2004) studied this relationship and found that leadership and followership are interdependent and that a leader's legitimacy depends on perceptions of competency and commitment by individual followers. That is, leadership will be prone to the individual perceptions of teachers, which may be prone to bias. Their results also suggest that teachers may be more likely to respond to vision, goals, and excellence in teaching when a school leader demonstrates individual concern.

Barriers identified by Muijs and Harris (2007) included teacher reluctance to take on leadership roles, lack of teacher experience or confidence, concern over how other teachers will respond, the formal leader's unwillingness to 'let go,' lack of administrative support, the challenging problems that arise on a daily basis, lack of time to take on leadership tasks, lack of communication with the administrative team, and lack of clear leadership roles. Their case studies suggest that for teacher leadership to be successful there has to be a fundamental cultural shift in the vision and values of the organization so that teacher leadership is embedded in the culture of the school. Teachers must be both willing and sufficiently skilled to take on leadership roles and they must be supported by their colleagues and administrators.

Not identified in the literature as a barrier, but certainly one seen in practice, is the pressure that stems from our current high stakes testing environment in public education. Public Law 107-110, more commonly known as the "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001", was intended to ensure that all children receive a quality education. The law stipulates that each state is to implement a single, statewide accountability system that will be effective in ensuring that all public schools make adequate yearly progress. In Pennsylvania, that progress was measured through State tests that were given to select grade levels or in select courses. Pennsylvania began with a series of tests in the areas of reading, math, writing, and science on tests commonly called the PSSAs and taken at select grade levels. In the past few years, however, the rules changed and 11th grade students are now measured based upon their performance in the Keystone Exams in the areas of Algebra I, Literature, and Biology. Instead of the tests given solely in grade 11, students take the test at the conclusion of the course. In Algebra I, for example, students may take the test anywhere from grade 7 through grade 11. Since PSSAs continue through eighth grade, some teachers must prepare their students for both the PSSA math and the Keystone Algebra I. With the Keystones, not passing the first time requires remediation followed by a re-test. Teachers of these select courses are now very much focused on ensuring that their students pass the test. Since being a teacher leader often requires extra preparation for teachers, some opt not to pursue a leadership position, choosing instead to focus solely on the children in their classroom. While the time commitment may scare some teachers away from teacher leadership, it seems that form of leadership is needed now more than ever. Collective work on areas such as curriculum development and specific instructional strategies would surely be stronger than the work of a one individual.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the rationale for and assumptions behind the qualitative research design of this study which explores teacher leadership in public secondary schools and best practices in cultivating that leadership. The chapter will address the role of the researcher, the data collection and analysis procedures utilized, the methods of verification implemented in order to assure accuracy of the data collected, and the outcome of the study with its relation to theory and literature.

Research Questions

The main as well as supplemental research questions explored as part of this qualitative study included:

Research question: How can teacher leadership be cultivated in public secondary schools? More specifically, what actions of school administrators seem related to encouraging the cultivation of teacher leaders?

- In what ways do teachers exercise leadership in these selected public secondary schools?

- What are some of the specific characteristics of teacher leaders in these selected public secondary schools?

- Of student and teacher benefits, what extent, if any, appear to be related to teacher leadership in these selected schools?

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Design

"Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 5).   Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed from their experiences. Since this study sought to understand how both teachers and building principals define teacher leaders and identify characteristics of teacher leaders, a qualitative approach was most appropriate. With data gathered, this research could then serve to develop a staff development path needed in order to cultivate teacher leaders within their professional setting. The study delved more specifically into why teacher leaders are needed and how teacher leaders are cultivated in their professional roles and responsibilities.

The rationale behind a qualitative model for this study is found in Merriam (2009, p. 14) who highlights four characteristics key to qualitative research: the focus is on the process, understanding, and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive. A survey was first used to identify particular teachers and school administrators who are favorable to the concept of teacher leadership; then a multisite case study approach ensued. In describing a strength of the case study qualitative research approach, Yin (2009, p. 4) emphasizes that this method "allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events." Additionally, Yin goes on to say that the case study is preferred in examining contemporary events when relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated. Case studies use direct observation, as well as interviews of those persons directly involved in the events.

Although qualitative research may never totally capture an objective "truth" or "reality," various strategies may be used by the qualitative researcher in order to increase the "credibility"

of the findings (Merriam, 2009). To increase the credibility of the reported findings in this study, data collected from observations, surveys and interviews were triangulated. Additionally, the study participants varied in educational experience, content certification, and gender.

Role of the Researcher

Long before teacher leadership became fashionable, I held the strong belief that teachers not only are very capable of being leaders, but also should engage in leadership tasks as part of their professional responsibilities. A building principal cannot possibly have all of the answers, nor should s/he be expected to have them. By harvesting the collective brain power of teachers and administrators, a faculty could easily make further advancements in providing the best possible education for their students. A collegial, collaborative atmosphere should prevail in a school setting and, as a building leader, the school principal will set that tone and develop that atmosphere.

My career as a professional educator began in 1981 and has encompassed roles such as special education teacher, special education instructional advisor, elementary principal, pupil services director, high school assistant principal, and, for the past 15 years, high school principal. My current position affords me the opportunity to work with a diverse student population in a Southcentral Pennsylvania school district that is quickly losing its suburban roots and being more comparable to an urban school setting. Several years ago, an administrator holding a superior position talked about bringing selected teachers into the "inner circle". That terminology bothered me since I believe that ALL teachers in my building should be in my "inner circle." All have strengths and, as the instructional leader of the building, it is my responsibility to help bring

those strengths to the forefront. My quest to develop all teachers as leaders began when that comment was made in my presence.

This research was completed with those building principals and teachers who demonstrate the same propensity. The manner in which teacher leadership is displayed may vary and even those teachers who are willing leaders may, at times, choose not to lead. The quest will be to determine how to successfully cultivate the belief of teacher leadership in all educators.

Data Collection Procedures

As a practicing building administrator, I have spent years observing various administrators within a tri-county area during administrative meetings and professional development sessions. I listen carefully to their explanations of what occurs within their buildings, how tasks get accomplished, and initiatives implemented. Through these interactions, I have formed opinions as to whether or not these building principals support the concept of cultivating teacher leaders within their schools. With this background knowledge, I selected three public secondary schools for initial consideration. These three schools include a suburban public high school in Adams County with approximately 85 teachers, a rural public high school in York County with approximately 80 teachers, and a suburban public middle school in York County with approximately 54 teachers. In order to determine if my suspicions were correct about their support of teacher leadership, a survey was utilized. "Survey research describes "what is," that is, how variables are distributed across a population or phenomenon" (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). Once permission was secured through the District offices, the building principal and willing teachers were asked to complete Crowther et al.'s survey (2009) entitled "Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership Perceptions" (Appendix A). Surveys were scored using the

accompanying "Scoring Protocol for the Self-Survey" (Appendix B). Crowther et al. created the

self-survey by adapting a questionnaire created by Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) and grounded

in the six elements of the Teachers as Leaders Framework. They use it as a means for teachers to

self-reflect on their readiness for teacher leadership and parallel leadership. Their experience

suggests that the vast majority of participants will score in the 11-22 range, meaning that teacher

leadership and parallel leadership have a reasonable degree of practical meaning and significance

to them. Permission had been granted by author Dr. Frank Crowther to use this survey

(Appendix C) which determines those who already have a propensity to value teacher leadership.

In this research, the self-survey was used to gain a basic understanding of the respondents'

perceptions. Only a cross section of those respondents scoring between 21 and 30 on the 30-

point scale were interviewed and observed, having been identified as having "virtually all your

attitudes, values, and beliefs align with the tenets of teacher leadership and parallel leadership"

(Crowther et al., 2009, p. 110).

Should any of the first three schools not have had sufficient support for teacher leadership

(i.e., a minimum of one principal and two teachers scoring between 21 and 30 on the self-

survey), the process would have continued with surveys of staff at additional schools until three

exemplar schools were located. Since these educators already have a positive attitude toward

teacher leadership, it seems appropriate to gather additional data from them regarding ways in

which this form of leadership could be cultivated.

Once identified as a teacher or principal who supports teacher leadership, two to three

teachers and the principal in each of the three public secondary schools were interviewed in

order to gather data to determine how teacher leadership could best be cultivated. The

"principal" could have been either the head principal or one of the assistant principals. The

teachers were selected in such a way that their backgrounds were diverse. Specifically, I incorporated teachers of different genders, ethnicity (when possible), varying years of educational experience, subjects taught, years in that school, etc. In using a case study research approach, each school was viewed as one case because of the interactions among the teachers and the fact that the same principal serves as the formal educational leader. A minimum of thirty minutes was allotted for teacher interviews in which questions were asked pertaining to their thoughts regarding teacher leadership, their involvement in leadership activities, and their opinions as to what would encourage them to take on more leadership activities ("Teacher Perceptions of Teacher Leadership in a Public Secondary School," Appendix D). Forty-five minutes was allotted for principal interviews which asked similar questions to those asked of teachers ("Principal Perceptions of Teacher Leadership in a Public Secondary School," Appendix E). The stated allotted times were for planning purposes only. Those interviewees who wished to speak for a longer period were accommodated. The interview questions were designed to determine those ingredients that are necessary in order for teachers to elect to take on leadership roles, then continue taking on those added responsibilities throughout their teaching careers.

As an additional means of data collection, following the initial interviews I observed both the teacher and principal participants completing a leadership activity, paying careful attention to the leadership qualities displayed and strategies utilized. The leadership activity could have involved presenting to other staff members, leading a faculty meeting or professional development session, leading a session to parents, or any other display of leadership. While observing, I scrutinized the interactions of those participating in the study to identify specific behaviors displayed that may support the concept of teacher leadership.

A second interview was to be conducted with each participant approximately three months after the first interview. Although the same basic questions were to be asked in the second interview, repeating the process would allow for verification of the initial answers. The second interview would also give both the interviewee and me an opportunity to further explore any previous questions or answers. My finding, however, was that teachers did not wish to meet a second time. Instead, I sent a follow up email again thanking them for their participation and asking if they had any additional thoughts on the topic of teacher leadership. All felt they had expressed their thoughts in the first interview. Judging from their thoughtful, extensive responses in the first interview, I did not push further.

Data Analysis

In some ways, data collection and analysis happen simultaneously in qualitative research since something said or observed could provide further insight to the research causing initial questions to surface. In order to ensure fidelity, each interview conducted was audio taped and later transcribed. The three different data sources (survey, observations, and interviews) from each teacher and principal were triangulated and carefully analyzed in an attempt to identify persistent themes from both teachers and principals regarding how to cultivate teacher leadership. Particular notice was given to specific behaviors (perceived or otherwise) of the building principals that would either cultivate or diminish teacher leadership. Data were coded in order to more easily categorize specific themes or patterns noticed. While some teachers may take leadership roles simply because it is their innate personality, it was hoped that specific recommendations could be determined which would encourage all teachers to play some sort of leadership role within their school setting. I was also seeking to determine if each of the cases

involved more of a distributed version of teacher leadership or parallel leadership, with mutual trust, shared purpose, and individual expression being regular components of the operation of the school.

Analysis was on-going and constant throughout the data collection phase. The constant comparative method of data analysis was used. Basically, this method involves constantly comparing data, beginning with a particular incident from the interviews or observations and comparing with other incidents from another set of data. These comparisons lead to developing categories and revising those categories as new data are obtained (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, as cited in Merriam, 2009).

Methods of Verification

Merriam (2009) suggests a number of strategies for promoting validity and reliability in qualitative research. A number of those strategies were utilized while conducting this study. First, in order to avoid potential threats to validity, a variety of methods of verification were used. Data were collected from a mixture of surveys, observations, and interviews with seven teachers and three principals of varying years of experience and educational backgrounds. Triangulation of the data collected strengthened the validity of the research by confirming emerging findings.

Second, there was adequate engagement in data collection as data were collected over a period of approximately two months with separate interviews with each participant. Also, since this is a concept the researcher espouses, I engaged in critical self-reflection throughout the data collection and analysis in order to prevent the inclusion of bias or assumption in the obtained results.

As another strategy to promote validity and reliability, I engaged in peer review with another professional who is regarded as a critical friend, i.e., one who would not hesitate to question my interpretations of the data if personal bias seemed evident. Finally, variation within the study participants was actively sought in order to allow for a greater range of application with the overall findings.

Summary

This chapter has reviewed the methods used within this qualitative study of three different public secondary schools and their approach to teacher leadership. Multiple sources of data were collected, coded, and analyzed in order to determine emerging themes. Chapter four now presents a detailed description of the results obtained by using these methodologies.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Having been a strong proponent of utilizing teacher leadership in schools, I focused this qualitative research on determining how teacher leadership can be cultivated in public secondary schools. Presumably, as part of the development of teacher leadership, specific actions of school administrators seem related to encouraging the cultivation of teacher leaders and I sought to develop an understanding of what those actions might be. While identifying principal actions as the main focus, it is difficult to investigate the cultivation of teacher leaders without having an understanding of how teachers actually exercise leadership within schools and what characteristics these teacher leaders portray. Thus, those two ideas are also addressed in this research. One final area that was explored, albeit minimally, pertained to the student and teacher benefits related to the use of teacher leaders in public secondary schools.

This chapter will present the results found in this qualitative research and will provide an analysis of the focal research question, as well as the three supplemental questions, based upon the case studies utilized from public schools in Southcentral Pennsylvania. I will first provide background information about each of the three case studies, followed by the methods of triangulation of these data. Next, I will discuss distributed leadership and one of its forms (parallel leadership) and how those tenets related to this research. Finally, the main focal question of this research will be answered, followed by each supplemental question.

Background Information of the Case Studies

School "R"

School "R" is a rural public high school, grades 9–12, with approximately 80 teachers. From professional interactions with the principal occurring throughout the past ten years, I suspected that she was someone who believed in the concept of teacher leadership. Data collection began with the administration of the Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership Perceptions (Appendix A) to the principal and her two male assistant principals. Not wanting to taint their answers, I originally told them very little about the focus of my research, other than the fact that it pertained to the cultivation of teacher leadership. Using the Scoring Protocol for the Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership Perceptions (Appendix B), I found that all three scored in the range indicating their attitudes, values, and beliefs aligned with the tenets of teacher leadership and parallel leadership, so I moved forward with the plan to survey the faculty.

A conversation with the principal of School R indicated that the entire faculty would not be getting together as an entire group for quite some time, but she agreed to forward an email from me to her faculty. My email to School R's faculty gave a global explanation of my research and requested their assistance by completing a brief survey which was attached to the email. In order for their answers to remain confidential, teachers were to email the survey directly back to me.

The principal of School R was selected to be the administrator interviewed for this school, as opposed to either of the assistant principals, for several reasons. First, although building leadership teams work together, it is typically the principal who is setting the vision and tone for the building more so than the assistants. Second, the principal of School R had more experience in education as a whole and as an educational leader. Finally, in considering all of the administrators in my three case studies, this principal was female and the other two would be

male. My goal for this research was to include as much diversity as possible in order to have a broader range of perspectives.

Although my request for participation was sent to the entire faculty, only eight responses were received. Of those eight, only five indicated they would be willing to be interviewed. Of those five, only three actually scored within the acceptable range of candidates for participation in this research. As one can imagine, I found this to be quite disappointing and presumably a limitation to this study. Even more disappointing, however, was my next discussion with the principal. As I analyzed the survey results, I knew that I needed further input prior to selecting candidates to be interviewed. I realized that while people may score high on the survey indicating their attitudes, values and beliefs may align with the tenets of teacher leadership, they may not be performing as or viewed as a teacher leader within their school. My next discussion with the principal indicated that one of my three options would not be someone she or others perceive to be a teacher leader. She then suggested another teacher, but that person had not returned the survey. The principal indicated she would get him to return it, so I awaited that response before moving forward. Unfortunately, when the response was returned, the teacher said he did not want to be interviewed, but I noted that, regardless of his willingness or lack thereof to be interviewed, he did not score within the appropriate range to be considered as a participant in this research. In qualitative research, analysis is on-going and this situation interested me. As a practicing building administrator, I want to believe that if I were to ask a teacher to complete a survey assisting a colleague in his/her research, that teacher would be one who I felt shared the belief in the value of teacher leadership and certainly one who would have said yes to an interview. It struck me as odd that, although the principal thought he would be a

good candidate, this teacher was not willing to participate, nor did his beliefs support the teacher leadership concept.

The observation of all participants of School R occurred during a School Improvement Planning Team meeting held on an in-service day. The meeting was a formal meeting conducted by the principal and included both assistant principals and the teacher members of this committee (approximately 20 people total). As the committee and I filtered into the room, I found two things surprising. First, I had some connection with several of the teachers present, either from simply working in the same county or from my previous work experience in this school district nearly 20 years earlier. Second, the Assistant Superintendent was also observing this meeting. Knowing her casually, we exchanged pleasantries and selected seats next to each other since we were both observers. The tables were set in a rectangular fashion so that all participants could see each other to speak. A PowerPoint was utilized as needed behind the principal, which was deemed the focal point of this rectangular setup. The assistant principals were seated along the sides and not at the front where the principal was as that area had some teachers filling those seats. I wondered if the Assistant Superintendent's presence would cause different group dynamics as this was her first year in this district. In closely scrutinizing the participants, none seemed concerned about the assistant superintendent's presence.

The School Improvement Planning Team meeting lasted approximately one hour with the principal serving as the facilitator. A formal agenda was used for the meeting which on this day was focusing on the analysis of the high school's School Performance Profile (SPP) score and discussing ways in which to improve Keystone assessment scores. One of the assistant principals spoke specifically about math and most teachers did not hesitate to voice their ideas. In observing the two teachers included in this research, I noted that one said nothing at all for the

entire meeting and the other mainly spoke at the end to offer an idea regarding how the group could better assist new teachers. His idea was to give first year teachers fewer classes than the more experienced teachers. This idea was met with opposition by other teachers who quickly realized that a break for first year teachers would mean more or larger classes for veteran teachers within the department. One teacher actually looked at my interviewee and said, "Get real". The principal salvaged the conversation and the person's dignity by offering to look into the situation to determine what could be done to assist new teachers, then moving the conversation in another direction. Overall, the atmosphere was positive in this formal, professional meeting. Most teachers on the committee contributed to the discussion.

The research participants from School R included the Principal (SchRPrin) and two teachers. SchRPrin is a female in the 44-64 year old range and has been involved with public education for 26 years, eight as a teacher and 18 as an administrator. She has been the principal of School R for ten years. The first teacher interviewed from School R (SchRTchr1) is a male in the Mathematics department and in the 44-64 age range. He has 19 years of educational experience, 15 in this school. The second teacher interviewed from School R (SchRTchr2) is a male Social Studies teacher with all ten years of his teaching experience in this school. He is in the 22-32 year old age range.

School "W"

School "W" is a suburban public high school, grades 9–12, with approximately 85 teachers. From professional interactions with the principal occurring sporadically throughout the past nine years, I suspected that he was someone who practiced the concept of using teachers as leaders. Data collection began by first administering the Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership

Perceptions (Appendix A) to the principal and his two assistant principals, one male and one female. Not wanting to taint their answers, I originally told them very little about the focus of my research, other than the fact that it pertained to the cultivation of teacher leadership. Using the Scoring Protocol for the Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership Perceptions (Appendix B), I found that the principal and his male assistant principal scored within the range indicating they believed in the concept of teacher leadership. The female assistant principal, however, did not score within the range, thus eliminating her from moving forward within the process. Noted was the fact that she was in her first year of school administration. Having at least one administrator to include, I proceeded with the plan to survey the faculty.

A conversation with the principal of School W indicated that the entire faculty would not be getting together as an entire group for about two months, but he offered to forward an email from me to the faculty. As with School R, my email to School W's faculty gave a global explanation of my research and requested their assistance by completing a brief survey which was attached to the email. They were to email the survey directly back to me in order for their answers to remain confidential. Based on the minimal returns from School R, I was apprehensive in taking this path for the surveys, but felt it was the best option given my time constraints. I was very pleasantly surprised when responses from School W quickly began arriving in my in-box. Of the thirty responses received, twenty teachers indicated a willingness to be interviewed. However, of those twenty, only twelve scored within the appropriate range. Additionally noted was the fact that three of the nine teachers who chose not to be interviewed did score within the range indicating the majority of their attitudes, values, and beliefs align with the tenets of both teacher and parallel leadership. One teacher who scored within the range did

not respond to the question asking whether or not he would be willing to participate in an interview.

Now narrowed to twelve potential interviewees, I tried to select an overall group that was diverse regarding their gender, content area, age, and years of educational experience. I noted that all but two of the overall respondents were Caucasian and, although they both indicated a willingness to be interviewed, neither scored within the designated range. My focus on the twelve again had me come to the realization that just because they had scored within a certain range did not ensure that they were filling teacher leadership roles within their schools, so I contacted the principal for his input. Unlike School R's principal, this principal felt that a number of those twelve identified were well-respected teacher leaders. Three were chosen, therefore, from different areas, different levels of experience, and included both genders. Additionally, since the principal typically sets the tone and the vision for the school more so than the assistant principals, the principal of School W was selected to be the administrator interviewed for this research.

The research participants from School W included the principal (SchWPrin) and three teachers. The principal is a male in the 33-43 year old range who has been an educator for 20 years, eight as a teacher and 12 as an administrator. He has been the principal of this suburban public high school for the past nine years. The first teacher interviewed from School W (SchWTchr1) is a male Technology Education teacher in the 33-43 year old range who has spent all eleven years as an educator in this school. The second teacher leader interviewed at School W (SchWTchr2) is a female 23 year veteran in the English department who exudes positivism. She is in the 44-64 year old range and all of her 23 years in education have been in this school. Despite the fact that she had just returned to school that morning after missing a few days due to

emergency outpatient surgery, she honored her commitment to meet with me that day. The final teacher interviewed from School W (SchWTchr3) is a female 22 year veteran Special Education teacher in the 44-64 year old range with seven years in this particular school. One somewhat unusual thing about this teacher is that she holds a doctoral degree. In public education in this geographical area, very few teachers hold a doctoral degree.

An observation occurred of School W's School Improvement Team which included the principal and one of the teacher leaders who was a participant in this research. In looking at the names of the nine teachers participating in this meeting, I noted that many of them had scored within the range indicating their attitudes, values and beliefs align with the tenets of teacher and parallel leadership. Most of them could readily have been included in this research, so I welcomed the opportunity to observe the functioning of this group. Prior to entering the room, the principal informed me that this committee technically comes under the umbrella of the female assistant principal; therefore, she would be the facilitator. On this day the group consisted of the principal, both assistant principals, and eight teachers. One of the teacher members was at a conference and not in attendance.

The regular format of the planning for this meeting is that the agenda is shared on a Google Doc prior to the meeting, so any committee member may add topics for discussion. Mentally, I noted the contrast between this school and School R where teachers first asked the principal if they could add an item to the agenda. The meeting centered on various topics which would help improve the school in some way. The first topic pertained to an upcoming open house/course selection night for the students and their families. The female assistant principal opened the meeting, but the principal quickly interjected his thoughts. While all participants actively participated, it was clear by his questions and comments to the group that the principal is

the building leader as teachers look to him to see how he responds. While I indicated that the principal was appearing as the building leader by his comments, it should also be noted that he tends to be a loquacious person. At one point, his teachers told him he needed to shorten his next presentation to parents so the teachers had more time with them at the open house/course selection presentation. Although they said it jokingly and with a smile, they all (principal included) recognized there was a serious aspect to their comments.

A second topic of discussion for School W's School Improvement Team focused on an upcoming professional development day pertaining to the new learning management system. This area is a specialty for SchWTchr1 and he was very knowledgeable and specific regarding what the teachers needed for that day. More than just talking about it, he had entered the meeting late because he had been on the phone with the consultant who would be providing the training. He was demonstrating his leadership to this committee of teachers and administrators.

School "B"

School "B" is a suburban public middle school, grades 6 - 8, with approximately 54 teachers. From some minimal professional interactions with the principal occurring throughout the past seven years, I suspected that he was someone who believed in and utilized the concept of teacher leadership. When the original plan of using this principal for my research was formulated, he worked in another county. However, about two years ago, he began working within the same school district in which I serve, but at a different educational level. Data collection began with first administering the Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership Perceptions (Appendix A) to the principal and his male assistant principal. Not wanting to taint their answers, I originally told them very little about the focus of my research, other than the fact that

it pertained to the cultivation of teacher leadership. Using the Scoring Protocol for the Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership Perceptions (Appendix B), I found that both the principal and his assistant principal scored within the range indicating their attitudes, values, and beliefs align with the tenets of teacher leadership and parallel leadership. Therefore, I moved forward with the plan to survey the faculty.

A conversation with the principal of School B indicated that the entire faculty would gather for a brief faculty meeting and I could have time to explain my research and have the teachers complete the survey on-site. The actual faculty meeting consisted of the assistant principal providing teachers with some very brief information, then turning it over to me. I provided School B's faculty with a global explanation of my research and requested their assistance by completing the survey. They completed the survey while on-site and handed it to me as they left for the day.

Of the forty-seven responses received, twenty-five teachers indicated a willingness to be interviewed. However, of those twenty-five, only eighteen scored within the appropriate range. Additionally noted was the fact that nine of the twenty-two teachers who chose not to be interviewed did score within the range indicating that virtually all of their attitudes, values, and beliefs align with the tenets of teacher leadership and parallel leadership. One teacher, the school nurse, did not fully complete the survey and indicated she believed I would prefer to have an actual teacher as a participant.

Now narrowed to eighteen potential interviewees and knowing many of them since we work in the same district, I opted to select candidates that were diverse regarding their gender, content area, age, and years of educational experience as compared to others participating in this research. I noted that all but one of the overall respondents was Caucasian and the teacher of

Hispanic descent opted not be included in the interviews. My focus on the eighteen again had me realize that merely because they had scored within a certain range did not ensure that they were filling teacher leadership roles within their schools. Thus, I contacted the principal for his input. Much like the principal of School W, this principal felt that a number of those identified were well-respected teacher leaders. Three were chosen from different content areas, different levels of experience, of different ages, and with consideration of gender. Additionally, since the principal typically sets the tone and the vision for the school more so than the assistant principal does, the principal of School B was selected as the administrator interviewed for this research. It should be noted that three teachers were selected to be interviewed. While I will report on two of those teachers with their interviews and observations, the third teacher did not acknowledge my emails requesting a time to interview her. While disappointed in her lack of response, I realized I did not want to interview someone who truly did not want to be involved in this research since her responses may be skewed.

Research participants in School B included the principal and two teachers. The principal (SchBPrin) is a male in the 33-43 year old range who has been an educator for 15 years, five as a teacher and 10 as an administrator. He is in the third year as principal of this suburban public middle school. The first teacher leader interviewed from School B (SchBTchr1) has been an educator for 15 years, with all of those years within this school district and the past ten within this particular school. SchBTchr1 is in the 33-43 year old age range and has been a School Counselor up until this school year. This year he opted to step into the role of Dean of Students for the school. The position is only guaranteed for one year as it is funded through a grant. The second teacher interviewed from School B (SchBTchr2) is an English/Language Arts teacher

who has spent all 12 of her years in education within this school. Although only having 12 years in education, this is a second career for this teacher and she is in the 44-64 year range.

SchBPrin was observed during several meetings. The initial observation was during the faculty meeting where, to my surprise, he really was not involved. The assistant principal ran the session and the principal stood off to the side of the room. He did have casual conversations with various teachers before and after the meeting. After interviewing him, however, I could see where this was one of the ways he built capacity in the assistant principal by having him facilitate the meeting. Another session observed was during a district-wide curriculum committee meeting. During that meeting, the committee (which included some of his teachers) was discussing science scores from the state assessments and looking at strategies to see improvement in the scores. The high school teachers offered ideas regarding dissecting the scores, timing of content offerings, and schedule changes. SchBPrin seemed receptive to some of the ideas and agreed to look into them further. The middle school teachers present were pleased with the ideas, but I sensed the high school teachers wondered why some of the ideas had not been thought of previously. However, SchBPrin's openness and willingness to accept suggestions left his teachers with a positive impression.

An observation of SchBTchr1 occurred as he facilitated a team meeting. The meeting consisted of all teachers of one of the two 8th grade teams and they communicated individual concerns about a number of students. These types of meetings are an opportunity for open communication as to a student's performance and a determination of what may be the root cause when performance is not as it should be. SchBTchr1 kept the meeting moving at a good pace, cognizant of each participant's time constraints, and ensured that all had an opportunity to contribute. Several times, he made encouraging comments to the teachers, recognizing that their

work is challenging and encouraging them to continue to support each child, academically and otherwise.

SchBTchr2 was observed several times in her participation of a district-wide curriculum committee and during a team meeting. During the curriculum committee meetings, she had been rather quiet, but she did serve as the note-taker for the group. Others from her school were much more verbal during the curriculum meetings. In the smaller team meeting, however, she was a very active participant.

Triangulation of Data

School R

Answers given by SchRTchr1 on the self-survey of leadership perceptions correlated to the answers given through the interview process and the observation. For example, SchRTchr1 checked "strongly agree" to the statement "Mentoring new teachers is part of the professional responsibility of a teacher." This was the same teacher who took on the added responsibility of being a cooperating teacher twice in one year. Working in the field, I know that many teachers hesitate to take on this added task once in a school year, let alone twice. He also strongly agreed that part of a teacher's job is to influence the educational ideas of others and that teachers can be school leaders while continuing with classroom instruction. Although still in agreement, this quiet man's survey answers were not as strong in areas such as providing recognition for teachers who try new teaching strategies, teachers allocating time to plan school-wide professional development activities, or that a teacher should convey optimism to students, colleagues and parents. Additionally, SchRTchr1 only checked "agree" rather than "strongly agree" to the statement "Administrators are a potential source of facilitative assistance for

teachers." This seems to correlate with his desire to be a substitute principal so that he could "cover lunches, do discipline, and walk the halls in that capacity." One would expect that a person desiring to be a principal would talk about how he could observe and interact with teachers, providing feedback in order to assist them in improving their craft.

In cross-referencing SchRTchr2's responses on the self-survey of leadership perceptions with his answers in the interview process and his observation in a committee meeting, I found that the responses were very similar. Of the fifteen statements, he "strongly agreed" with ten of them, including the following: Part of being a teacher is influencing the educational ideas of other teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders; Mentoring new teachers is part of the professional responsibility of a teacher; and Teaching means standing up for all students, including those who are marginalized and disadvantaged. SchRTchr2 talked about the importance of doing what is best for all students and building public support for the school. In fact, he seemed motivated to work to improve the school when the environment within the building was, as he described it, "toxic." On the survey, SchRTchr2 "disagreed" with the statement "Teachers should be recognized for trying new teaching strategies whether or not they succeed." This was the only statement where "disagree" was marked. This response correlates with his description of teacher leaders as "humble" and his self-motivation. He describes himself as "highly motivated," so one can conclude that he does not rely on extrinsic motivation.

SchRPrin interview responses were very positive regarding the importance of utilizing teacher leaders within the school and community setting. Despite having taken nearly all of her time in this school (ten years) to get to this point, she believes she is seeing the fruits of her labor. Her survey responses showed a strong correlation to her interview responses and the observation of her with her teachers. Of the fifteen statements pertaining to leadership

perspectives, she answered "strongly agree" to thirteen statements and "agree" to the other two. The two statements that she only "agreed" to pertained to mentoring new teachers as a professional responsibility and the requirement for teachers to incorporate their knowledge and skills into professional development activities.

School W

In comparing his interview answers to his completed survey and the observation of him within a committee meeting, SchWPrin was very supportive of the concept of teacher leadership and the tenets of parallel leadership in all settings. Of the fifteen survey statements, he responded "Strongly Agree" to nine and "Agree" to six. Of the six that were only "agree," they seemed to be the ones that would spend teacher time on items other than actual teaching. For example, he only "agreed" to the following: Teachers should participate actively in educational policy making; Teachers should allocate time to help plan school-wide professional development activities; and Teachers should know how organizations work and be effective at getting things done within them. As noted previously, SchWPrin was very respectful of a teacher's time and did not choose to infringe upon it.

Triangulating data from SchWTchr1's interview, survey responses, and observation indicates a correlation between them. Of the fifteen statements responded to on the survey, SchWTchr1 indicated agreement with all statements; seven answers of "agree" and eight answers of "strongly agree." Specific survey answers that correlated to his interview answers were as follows. This positive gentleman answered "strongly agree" to the statement "An educational leader should convey optimism to students, colleagues, and parents." Additionally, he "strongly agreed" to those statements indicating a teacher should assist other teachers through professional

development activities, mentoring, and taking an active role in decision making about instructional materials. Recall that in his interview responses and his observation, he demonstrated leadership by assisting in selecting a new learning management system, coaching others in how to utilize it, and organizing the professional development needed for other teachers.

In considering SchWTchr2's survey and interview responses, a correlation was noted. She had marked "Strongly Agree" to ten of the fifteen statements regarding teacher leadership and "Agree" to the other five statements. Of note, however, was the statement "An educational leader should convey optimism to students, colleagues, and parents." Recall that SchWTchr2's responses spoke of the importance of being positive. For this statement, she placed not one X in the "Strongly Agree" box, but "XXXX!!" indicating how important she believes optimism to be.

On the Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership Perceptions (Appendix A), SchWTchr3 scored at the highest level by marking "Strongly Agree" to all fifteen of the statements pertaining to teacher leadership. Scoring in this way suggests that virtually all of her attitudes, values, and beliefs align with the tenets of teacher and parallel leadership. In reflecting on her interview responses, she did indicate strong support for teachers as leaders within their school settings and community. Her responses were direct and to the point, seeming to indicate she was not one to waste time while at school. She was cognizant of her beliefs and was willing to work for the betterment of all students.

School B

Triangulating the survey, interview, and observation of SchBTchr1 found that all responses and actions were similar. This teacher leader had checked "Agree" to eight of the

survey statements and "Strongly Agree" to seven of the statements. Noted was the fact that, by

profession, this educator had been a school counselor rather than a classroom teacher. The

statements for which he checked "Strongly Agree" included: Teaching is as important as any

other profession; Administrators are a potential source of facilitative assistance for teachers;

Teachers can continue with classroom instruction and, at the same time, be school leaders;

Mentoring new teachers is part of the professional responsibility of a teacher; An educational

leader should convey optimism to students, colleagues, and parents; and Teaching means

standing up for all students, including those who are marginalized and disadvantaged.

Triangulation of the data from the survey, interview, and observations found a strong

correlation between answers and actions. Of the fifteen statements pertaining to teacher

leadership on the survey, SchBTchr2 rated twelve of the statements as "Strongly Agree."

Answers that were rated as "Agree" included: Teachers should be recognized for trying new

strategies whether or not they succeed and Teachers should allocate time to help plan school-

wide professional development activities. The third statement initially surprised me that it was

only "Agree." That statement said "Mentoring new teachers is part of the professional

responsibility of a teacher." When reviewing my notes, however, I noticed that SchBTchr2 did

not mention mentor teacher in her long list of leadership activities.

SchBPrin's triangulated data from the survey, interview, and observations were very

closely connected. When I first reviewed his survey, I noted that he had scored "Strongly

Agree" on all fifteen statements pertaining to teacher leadership. As qualitative research

involves on-going analysis, I secretly wondered if he really held those strong beliefs. In

conducting the interview and observations, I grew to realize that this principal truly does have

virtually all of his attitudes, values and beliefs aligned with the tenets of teacher and parallel leadership.

Distributed and Parallel Leadership

In Chapter 2, I described both distributed and parallel leadership, both of which require the utilization of teacher leadership. Distributed leadership is characterized as a form of collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working together, contrasting with traditional notions of leadership which are premised upon an individual managing a hierarchical system and structure (Harris, 2004). Distributed leadership, therefore, means multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture. At its core, distributed leadership is made by a culture of collaboration and collegiality. In order for distributed leadership to be successful, much depends on the internal conditions, which are often set by the formal leadership, to support and nurture collaborative learning and to harness the leadership energy that results (Harris, 2004). Thus, although it presumes active involvement at all levels, the question is raised as to whether this type of leadership is then really 'top-down' since it depends heavily on the formal leadership of the organization.

Parallel leadership, as defined by Crowther et al. (2002), is a form of distributed leadership. Parallel leadership is a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action to build school capacity. It embodies mutual respect, shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression. To further explain, Crowther et al. (2002) say this about parallel leadership.

> In summary, parallel leadership engages teacher leaders and administrators in
> collaborative action while, at the same time, encouraging fulfillment of their individual

capabilities, aspirations, and responsibilities. It leads to strengthened alignment between the school's vision and the school's teaching, learning, and assessment practices. It facilitates professional learning, culture building, and schoolwide approaches to pedagogy. It makes possible the enhancement of school identity, teachers' professional esteem, community support, and students' achievements. (p. 42)

Possible candidates for inclusion in this research completed the "Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership Perceptions" (Appendix A) which I then scored using the "Scoring Protocol for the Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership Perceptions (Appendix B). Both of these items are from the work of Crowther et al. (2002). To qualify as a candidate in this research, teachers and principals first needed to score at a level which correlated to this statement: "Virtually all of the respondent's attitudes, values, and beliefs align with the tenets of teacher leadership and parallel leadership." Since all ten of my interviewees (three principals and seven teachers) had scored in that range, one of my last interview questions was "Do you feel there is mutual trust between you and the principal? A sense of shared purpose? Do teachers freely express themselves in this school? Explain/give examples." To a person, each teacher interviewed paused for a moment before answering. Since parallel leadership would portray itself differently in each school setting, I will explain the responses from each individual case study.

In School R, I first interviewed the two teachers, followed by the principal. When asked the question regarding the tenets of parallel leadership, one of the teachers, SchRTchr1, answered this way.

> While there is now a shared sense of purpose and mutual trust and most individuals will freely express themselves, this just happened within the last couple of years. When the principal first arrived, she focused heavily on the math department since that was her background. The math department members felt she was more of a dictator than a collaborator and she did not take their opinions into consideration. Now that scores on standardized tests have been rising and she is more comfortable in her role, there is mutual trust.

He also felt that the faculty and administration have a shared sense of purpose and that most teachers will freely express themselves. While SchRTchr1, a mathematics teacher, indicated positive comments about the principal/teacher relationship, I could not help but wonder if that was because, as he said, "Now English is under the microscope." Input from an English teacher may have brought a different response.

The second teacher from School R, SchRTchr2, responded similarly to the question regarding the tenets of parallel leadership.

> Six to seven years ago, trust was not strong. Morale was low. At one point, the environment was toxic. Trust and relationships have improved drastically. It was my personal mission to help change the climate.

He went on to explain some of his efforts in working with administration to improve the school climate. The State's enactment of a supervision model actually seemed to help this school develop a shared sense of purpose. When moving into the third tenet, regarding teachers freely expressing themselves, he responded, "Yes and no." He went on to explain what he called a very "dark" time for the school, a time when "questions were banned." He gave the blame of this at least in part to the faculty, since many of them would ask questions to explicitly express negativity and intended to incite a disruption. After years of teachers and administration working to change the climate and culture, SchRTchr2 believes the school is now more aligned with the tenets of parallel leadership.

Following the interviews with the teachers, I moved on to interview the principal of School R (SchRPrin). Since qualitative research lends itself to ongoing analysis, I was quite curious to hear her thoughts on teacher leadership after knowing what two of her teacher leaders felt regarding how the building functions. While both teachers indicated some of the tenets of parallel leadership existed, they also both acknowledged that the situation within the school was

better than it had been several years prior. It seemed to me that the school culture was more aligned with traditional distributed leadership since SchRTchr2 first privately asked permission to bring up a topic under "other matters" in a committee meeting. Additionally, one of his last comments to me was, "At the end of the day, administration is the boss. It is up to them to make teacher leaders head in a positive direction."

When asked if the principles of parallel leadership were present, SchoolRPrin's answers did not include as much detail as that of the teachers. She did believe that mutual trust existed, although admittedly it had taken her all ten of her years there to establish it. She also believed that a shared sense of purpose existed and that teachers freely expressed them.

It appears to me that School R has gone through a very difficult time. However, with the building administrators demonstrating some of the same findings identified in this research as ways to cultivate teacher leadership, the climate and culture of the school have improved. Specifically, open, honest and frequent communication has helped in developing trust. The principal has shown confidence in her teachers in various ways (e.g., asking them to serve as cooperating teachers, supporting a garden project, etc.) and provided the support and necessary resources. Overall, her efforts are fruitful in that this form of distributed leadership is developing.

In School W, the principal was interviewed first, followed by three teachers interviewed consecutively. From this principal's perspective, there is mutual trust between teachers and principal, admittedly something he continues to work on in terms of being consistent for the faculty. He believes that the administrators and teachers have a shared sense of purpose and that teachers freely express themselves. As with the principal from School R, SchWPrin did not give too many details in responding to this question. However, knowing that so many more teachers

responded when he asked them to complete my research survey, I sensed there would be a different culture in this school and I looked forward to my interviews with the teachers.

The first teacher interviewed, SchWTchr1, believes that the tenets of parallel leadership exist in this school. That is, he felt there is mutual trust and a shared sense of purpose between the teachers and principal. He also believed that teachers freely express their opinions. Interestingly, he described a tour that the faculty took to a Civil War battlefield. The tour guide spoke to them not only about the actual battle, but also about General Robert E. Lee's vision and leadership and the impact these had on the entire organization. In relating this learning to his school environment, this tour influenced SchWTchr1 to begin pondering the vision and leadership of his school's principal and how, in a big picture way, it impacted their entire building. In closing our interview, SchWTchr1 reiterated how there are great leaders within this school, both administrators and faculty. He shared that people have a willingness to collaborate, wishing for more time in which to do so. During part of the battlefield tour, the question was asked, "Who is your mentor and who are you mentoring?" Those words resonate with SchWTchr1 as he tries to bring about positive change.

As with other teachers interviewed, the question probing the tenets of parallel leadership caused a moment of pause for SchWTchr2. Regarding mutual trust between the teachers and principal, she responded, "That depends on the topic." The interviewee expanded upon that, "The principal perceives himself as open to listening, yet some things must be a certain way, his way." Overall, this teacher felt the three administrators at the high school created a great team.

> The three on the administrative team work well together. The assistants have strengths in areas the principal does not. Having the two assistant principals on the team has brought building morale up in the past two years.

The principal was described as a problem solver and the assistants as better with positive reinforcement to faculty. "The principal," she claimed, "would be agreeable to this perception." In reflecting on his input to me, the principal did describe himself as a bit of a "control freak" and said he was working on that aspect of his personality.

Similar to others interviewed, the question pertaining to the concept of parallel leadership seemed to garner the most reaction for SchWTchr3. While she felt that the teachers do express themselves freely in this school, she did not believe the school has a collaborative culture. "We do not have a collaborative culture. We are not all on the same page." As for trust, "That depends on the individuals." Although the majority of teachers trust their building administrators, she says she continues to hear grumblings from various colleagues.

Overall, School W appears to be well on the way to regularly practicing the tenets of parallel leadership. It seems that teachers willingly express themselves, but there are some underlying issues when looking at mutual trust and working collaboratively. As a practicing administrator, I understand how difficult it is to get all teachers in the school working with a shared sense of purpose and trusting each other and/or administration.

School B was the final case study for this research and the one most aligned with the tenets of parallel leadership. When asked specifically about those tenets, SchBTchr1 felt there is mutual trust and a shared sense of purpose between him and the principals. Especially in his role as Dean of Students but previously in his role as a guidance counselor, SchBTchr1 works closely with the principals for a common cause. He expressed that teachers freely express themselves in this school "more so now than a couple of years ago." Since the principal is in his third year with this group, I understood this teacher's comments to mean that teachers did not express themselves under a prior administration. I would also note that guidance counselors typically

have a closer relationship with the building principals than many teachers have due to the sensitive nature of the on-going discussions regarding students and their families that must occur.

When asked specifically about the tenets of parallel leadership, SchBTchr2 responded "absolutely" to the question regarding mutual trust between teachers and principal and regarding a shared sense of purpose between the two. Pertaining to teachers freely expressing themselves, she indicated that this does occur. However, she did point out that the previous principal received it differently when teachers spoke out. "Teachers are willing to say what they need to say even though they are not always politically correct or even polite." The current principal is more supportive of teacher contributions and recognizes that the teachers are really trying to make things better for students and the school community.

The survey responses from the principal of School B, SchBPrin, most closely aligned to parallel leadership as defined by Crowther et al. (2002). Parallel leadership is a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action to build school capacity. It embodies mutual respect, shared purpose, and an allowance for individual expression. When asked about the tenets of parallel leadership, SchBPrin responded to each tenet very specifically. He does believe there is mutual trust between principal and teachers in his school. "I spent my entire first year on gaining the trust of teachers. Now the teachers will work harder for me." He also believes there is a sense of shared purpose and that teacher leaders are a good liaison between the position of teacher and administrator. When teacher leaders begin to see how their colleagues sometimes respond or react, they will often comment, "I cannot believe my colleagues do this." Regarding freely expressing themselves, SchBPrin felt teachers willingly express themselves. He also mentioned this can be a downside since his door is always open and it does take time to always be willing to listen. His caution about teacher leadership was "The

faculty must be ready to see their peers in these roles and the principals need to be careful how and who they put into leadership roles."

Basically, School B research participants indicated that all three tenets of parallel leadership are actively displayed in this school. Many actions of the principal, which are reported as findings supportive of the cultivation of teacher leadership in this research, enhance this collaborative and collegially atmosphere. That is, SchBPrin is very positive and supportive of his faculty. He takes time to communicate with them and they, in turn, have developed a trust of him. Since there is mutual trust, they willingly take on leadership roles.

In the three schools studied, teacher leadership is an integral part of the school climate and culture. While certain principal behaviors encourage this type of leadership to flourish, some teachers choose to lead at different times or in different situations. Distributed leadership was observed in all of the schools. Although some tenets of parallel leadership existed in each school, mutual trust, a shared sense of purpose, and teachers freely expressing themselves was not pervasive and consistent in any of these schools. These tenets do surface with some of the faculty members, but not the entire faculty all of the time. Overall, all three of the schools included in this study have a healthy start on the path to establishing an environment where parallel leadership exists and teacher leadership is the norm.

Actions to Support the Cultivation of Teacher Leadership in Public Secondary Schools

The research question this section will answer is: How can teacher leadership be cultivated in public secondary schools? More specifically, what actions of selected school administrators seem related to encouraging the cultivation of teacher leaders?

In analyzing the case studies included in this research, the following are specific actions of school administrators that seem to cultivate teacher leadership.

- *Demonstrate confidence in the teacher's abilities when completing meaningful work and provide support, encouragement, and resources (including time) needed to complete the task.*
- *Have open, honest, and frequent communication between administrators and teachers.*
- *Be consistent in actions and responses so that teachers develop trust in administrators.*

In order to answer this and all research questions, I collectively analyzed data from all three schools involved: School R, a rural public high school; School W, a suburban public high school; and School B, a suburban public middle school, all located within the Southcentral Pennsylvania area. Those interviewed included three principals, two males and one female, and seven teachers, four males and three females. Interviewees were of various age levels and years of educational experience. The teachers were also from different content areas, including Mathematics, Social Studies, English, Counseling, Special Education and Technology Education. In triangulating these data, I analyzed surveys completed, interview comments, and conducted observations of the participants. Although all interview responses were considered, specific questions asked to obtain information pertinent to answering this research question included:

- Why do you play those leadership roles? (This question is asked after they say which leadership roles they do play.)
- Are there other leadership roles you would like to take on?
- What would encourage you in the direction of taking on more/other leadership roles?
- Conversely, is something stopping you from taking on more/other leadership roles?

I will report on the data from participants which have led to my conclusions.

Looking first at School W provided some significant insight. When asked for his thoughts regarding what encourages teachers to take on leadership roles, the principal of School

W, SchWPrin, felt strongly about how to encourage teachers in the taking on additional leadership roles.

> Principals need to give teachers the opportunity to speak and have the principal actually listen. The principal needs to encourage teachers. Teachers need to work on real issues and not something contrived.

He was very respectful of the teachers' time and did not want them doing something that was not meaningful or necessary. He felt that teachers needed to be involved in meaningful decision-making that would impact the school. Our discussion also included the notion that it takes time for a principal and teacher to get to know and understand each other. Thus, that trust of knowing how the other person will respond develops over time. SchWPrin said the follow.

> When principals change too frequently, the faculty and administration are in a constant state of dating. Now, my people know what to expect from me; they trust me.

He felt he had an advantage by serving in this same school for what was now nine years.

The teachers from School W conveyed similar responses. When asked why he plays leadership roles, SchWTchr1 simply felt that you should treat others as you want to be treated. "Just like you learn in kindergarten, you treat someone how you want to be treated." He recalled what it was like to be in need of guidance as a beginning teacher and the many people who were there to support him. Now that he has more experience and knowledge, he wants to return the favor to others. He is modeling what he perceives others modeled for him, not just the teachers, but also the administrators. SchWTchr1 has great respect for his building administrators and strives to mimic the leadership traits that he witnesses.

One can tell that SchWTchr1 wants to be the best he can be at his craft. He talked about "time" being something that holds him back from taking on more, indicating that he needs to feel prepared to teach each and every lesson to the best of his ability. "If I always felt prepared, I would do more in terms of leadership roles." As with other teachers, he strived to balance his

time at work with the time devoted to his family. Despite the fact that teachers could learn from

administrators, "invaluable" is how he described the benefit of learning from other teachers who

are also in the classroom every day.

When asked why she plays various leadership roles, SchWTchr2, another teacher from

School W, gave a quote that she lives by. "What do we live for if not to make the world better

for others?" The quote gives deep insight into this teacher's personality and character. She

understands the importance of being a role model for students and strives to be a person who

makes a positive difference in the lives of others. She believes it is nice to know someone

appreciates you, so she in turn likes to show others her appreciation for them. The importance of

displaying a positive attitude links to the findings in the research (Boes & Halsall, 2009; Reason

& Reason, 2011).

Currently, SchWTchr2 does not wish to take on additional leadership roles mainly

because she already is a teacher, coach, and parent of two active sons. She described her

relationship with her student athletes and said they call her "Coach Mom." In my personal

experiences both as a building principal and as a parent, I understand the close connection

student athletes often have with their coaches. The bond is a special one and, if done well, takes

much time on the part of the coach, not merely the time spent during practices and contests.

SchWTchr3 is a Special Education teacher at School W who willingly takes on

leadership roles. When asked why she takes on those roles both within her school and her school

district, she offered the following.

> Different voices need to be heard. Sometimes, the special education voice is not
> represented.

Her desire was to be the voice of balance. Often, she will first watch to see who volunteers for

various committees and, if she feels that the representation is not diverse, she will join the group

in order to ensure all students have equitable representation. "I don't have to win. I just want them to consider multiple voices." Currently, her main concern is in regard to how standardized testing is impacting the curriculum for the special education population. Specifically, she believes:

> Schools need to teach what students need in order to pass the state standardized test, leaving little if any time to teach those skills that may be more applicable to the student's life beyond high school.

Thus, she is joining committees to provide a voice regarding what she believes is truly important in a special education student's curriculum.

This teacher leader was very clear about what would encourage her to take on more leadership roles.

> I am willing to continue to lead as long as there is open listening from administration or the community.

She understands that her ideas may not be implemented, but she wants people to at least consider various opinions and options. As with others, she is concerned about the time she has available while balancing her personal and professional lives. "With the shortage of substitute teachers, teachers are constantly being pulled from their prep time to cover for other teachers." Thus, teachers often have to complete their planning outside of the school contractual day.

Overall, regarding how best to cultivate teacher leaders, School W's collective response pertained to actually listening when teachers speak. If the teachers felt they were making a contribution to a meaningful decision, then they would be more likely to continue in a leadership capacity.

Focusing next on School B, the first teacher, SchBTchr1, talked about why he offered to move into a Dean of Students role, a position only guaranteed for one year. He talked about feeling stagnant professionally and how he wanted to have a positive effect on as many students

as possible. Being a positive role model was crucial for him. In the future, he would like to run in-service sessions and mentor other professionals. "New people need a perspective. They need a mentor." In reflecting on my background knowledge of this participant and hearing his personal reflections, it is evident that thus far in his career, SchBTchr1 has actually been more of a behind-the-scenes leader. He has not been actively participating on committees within the school or the school district as many others have, other than team meetings. His leadership has been quieter, directly working with teachers and administrators. The humility that SchBTchr1 displayed brought to mind Collinson's (2012) work. Educators displaying humility recognize they can learn from everyone and from every experience. They are not afraid to take risks, nor are they afraid to admit when they are wrong. This teacher leader has quietly been working to provide our youth with a model of how best to behave.

SchBTchr1 would opt for additional leadership roles if he had more time. "You can't be a leader of too many things. You must have comfort within." His professional educator responsibilities take time, as do his other roles as father, husband, and athletic coach. Upon reflecting, he also admitted that he sometimes doubts himself. Lacking self-confidence in certain areas sometimes stops him from pursuing additional leadership roles.

As with some of the others interviewed, SchBTchr2, a veteran language arts teacher at this middle school, does not necessarily see herself as a leader despite the many leadership roles she plays. She feels that her parents raised her to be a voice and to speak up when injustice is present. Therefore, she is doing what she believes is the right thing. "If you are going to complain, you must be willing to be part of the solution." Although an adult with older children of her own, she still desires to make her parents proud.

When asked about other leadership roles she would be willing to embark upon, she mentioned someday moving into an administrative realm. She is in a self-reflective stage and wants to utilize her gifts and talents while still being her own person. "I often wonder: are leaders born or do they become that way?" Something that would encourage her to take on additional roles would be if she could see progress; if she could see that she was making a difference. Conversely, if no progress was being made, SchBTchr2 would not participate in leadership roles.

> I would be discouraged to be involved if I was just spinning my wheels and not seeing progress.

Since this teacher was my last teacher interview I conducted and feeling comfortable with this interviewee, I veered slightly off script to further pursue what would encourage a teacher to be a leader. Specifically, I asked if principal encouragement or a stipend would encourage her. Without hesitation, SchBTchr2 indicated that neither of those would encourage her. While she does not see herself as a leader, she does have a stronger, more confident personality. She spoke of a quote she lives by which indicated her value is not dependent on others.

> If a person is a leader, they will do what is the right thing to do. While principal encouragement may be helpful, my value is not dependent on others. I definitely would not be encouraged by money.

None of the seven teachers interviewed indicated money would be a motivating factor. They all seemed to have an internal desire to accomplish some good and would step into leadership roles at selected times or for selected topics.

On the self-survey regarding the perceptions pertaining to teacher leadership, the principal of School B, SchBPrin, had the highest possible score, indicating that virtually all of his attitudes, values, and beliefs align with the tenets of teacher leadership and parallel leadership. Thus, I was anxious to interview him and gain insight into his thoughts. When asked what he

believes might encourage teachers to take on more leadership roles, SchBPrin responded as follows.

> Teachers love to be trusted. They need to be treated like professionals and respected. The principal needs to value them. Teachers want to impact change in the building. They like to feel valued by their peers and their administrators.

Conversely, when asked what stops teachers from taking on additional roles, this is the answer he gave.

> Teachers are being inundated with more expectations each year from both the state and district levels, making it difficult to have time to take on new roles. Some are too busy or may not be confident enough to lead. Some teachers do not want to take on leadership roles for fear they would be judged by their peers as being the "principal's favorite."

SchBPrin sees his role as one of a person who must build relationships with teachers, to develop a partnership. In doing that, the principal must be transparent and work collaboratively with teachers. Teachers need to be empowered. He cultivates teacher leaders by trusting teachers, being open with them, and being non-judgmental. SchBPrin indicated that he cannot do the whole job himself and by using teachers to assist, he really is working smarter, not harder.

Based upon responses from School B, in order to cultivate teacher leadership, teachers need to be trusted and respected. They need to have meaningful problems to solve and be given the time in which to solve them. They want to see the fruits of their labor and feel valued for their efforts. Regarding barriers confronting teacher leaders, SchBPrin said the following.

> Teachers are not quite sure what their role is. They are not an administrator, but they are more of a leader. Teachers are sometimes unsure of their exact role and they don't want to overstep their bounds.

He also talked about what happens when a teacher is placed in a leadership role that does not really suite him/her.

> The principal then needs to provide proper coaching and, at times, remove the teacher from that role. Some people are better at leading from behind the scenes.

Finally, the focus will shift to School R. When asked why he played leadership roles, the first teacher interviewed from School R (SchRTchr1) indicated, "I enjoy helping to make decisions and my involvement in various committees is a good way to go the extra mile." SchRTchr1 also indicated that committee participation looks good on a resume, indicating to me that he participates, at least in part, for personal gain. In further discussion, SchRTchr1 holds his principal certification and has interviewed for several assistant principal positions. However, he had not been successful in obtaining any of those positions and he had some theories as to why. Since his rationale does not pertain to this research, those comments will not be recorded. When pressed further as to what would cause him to take on additional teacher leadership roles, SchRTchr1 really could not identify anything specific. However, in responding to a different question, his comments indicated that he seemed to develop this confidence and desire to lead others when the principal had asked him to be a cooperating teacher twice within the same year. The trust the principal showed in asking him to mentor others led to self-confidence in mentoring and in additional areas. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) referred to teacher leaders as sleeping giants. "This sleeping giant can be awakened by helping teachers believe they are leaders, by offering opportunities to develop their leadership skills, and by providing school cultures that honor their leadership" (p. 2). By the principal asking SchRTchr1 to be a cooperating teacher twice in one year, she showed him that she respected him as a teacher and a leader, thus awakening the sleeping giant and opening the door for him to take on additional leadership roles.

A second teacher from School R, SchRTchr2, is involved in a number of leadership roles. Reflecting on why he plays these various leadership roles, SchRTchr2's immediate response was, "I care." It was at this point in the interview where his passion for education and his desire to make a difference in the world was truly evident.

I believe in being a difference maker. I want what is best for kids, staff, and education. Education is one great equalizer.

He explained that his very nature is such that he is willing to have open dialogue with administrators and colleagues and that he is not afraid to be the one who initiates that dialogue. He does not shy away from disagreement and he understands the idea of consensus. "Good people can't just sit by and watch. They need to work to make things better." Crowther et al. (2002, 2009) talked about the ethical stance regarding teacher leadership. That is, teacher leadership is based on views of both a better world and the powers of teachers to contribute to the success of the school and the quality of life within the community. SchRTchr2 sought to make improvements in the school and outside community because it is simply what he believes. As a self-described "good person," he finds stepping in to make things better is the proper thing to do. While I appreciated getting to know this teacher, I admittedly was surprised that he also mentioned that he is passionate about "contract enforcement." SchRTchr2 is a leader in this school district's educational association and an underlying tension between faculty and administration seemed to rise to the surface. My experience has been that people who indicate they are "passionate about contract enforcement" are doing so because they feel that management has not, in the past, followed the contract. In this situation, as the open communication happened more frequently between the faculty and administration, the environment became more positive and trusting.

In our discussion, SchRTchr2 mentioned the topic he had brought up at the committee meeting which was how to help first year teachers. He also indicated that he had approached the principal within the past week to inform her that he wanted to discuss this topic in front of the group. While SchRTchr2 felt positively about the fact that the principal allowed him to offer the topic to the group, I mentally questioned if this was truly a school where opinions are welcome if

they first had to be discussed with the principal before they could be vocalized to the entire group. In an open environment with mutual trust, teachers should be comfortable discussing topics of their choice and offering dissenting opinions for the purposes of considering all possible options and voices.

From the principal perspective in School R, SchRPrin believes, "Administrators must support and encourage teachers to help them act in more of a leadership capacity." She described her experience as getting a "flow" going with the faculty. That is, "If teachers see others leading, they in turn will be encouraged to lead." Basically, she described developing a school culture in which teacher leadership is viewed as acceptable, perhaps even expected. She did acknowledge that teachers sometimes confide in her that they do not want to take on leadership roles because of the pushback they receive from their colleagues, from those with negative attitudes. Ackerman and Mackenzie (2006) acknowledged that when teachers take the risk of advocating for what they believe is best for students, colleagues may view them in a negative light. Thus, it is important for the building principal to work to change that school culture.

SchRPrin described the role of the principal in the process of developing teacher leaders in the following way.

> The role of the principal is to be a supporter and encourager as well as to provide what is needed to bring ideas to fruition. For example, the teacher may need financial support or time to accomplish the task.

She also expressed that the principal must have truthful conversations with teachers, since those conversations often end up being the outside perspective that makes teachers aware of the qualities they have. Her views are consistent with the literature in regard to how the principal can help cultivate teacher leadership. Some guidelines for cultivating teacher leadership include

helping teachers gain confidence by listening, supporting and removing barriers and letting people know that teacher leaders are accepted (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). In stating conditions necessary for the development of teacher leadership, Crowther et al. (2002) included the importance of public and professional acceptance of the existence of teacher leaders and the active support of the principal.

Overall, a number of the responses were focused on the same premise. That is, teachers will function in a leadership role if the work is meaningful and the principal demonstrates confidence in the teacher's abilities and provides support needed to complete the task. Teachers view themselves as very busy people and want to be able to see progress as a result of their involvement. The principal should provide support, encouragement, trust, and the resources needed to accomplish the project.

A second area that surfaced in cultivating teacher leadership is that administrators need to truly listen to teachers if they want them to take on leadership roles. Teachers need to feel as though they are being heard. They will give input and lend their voice to a decision if the school administrators and others are willing to listen. A person feels valued when s/he is able to contribute for the good of a cause and will likely continue to participate if positive feedback is received. It would also be important to build a school culture where participating in leadership roles is the norm, rather than the exception. Sometimes teachers are concerned that their peers will respond negatively should they decide to serve as a leader. If that culture can be changed, more teachers may be willing to step into leadership roles.

Over and over again, responses indicated that teachers need more time. With additional responsibilities and pressure to pass a standardized test, teachers tend to use every minute of the school day. Personal lives are important for proper balance to occur, so teachers want to ensure

that time remains for their families. Thus, finding time to take on additional roles was consistently mentioned as a barrier. Ironically, no teacher mentioned money as a motivator to take on additional leadership roles. Many of these teachers are self-motivated people who are looking to constantly improve the school learning environment for students and staff. The better the relationship between faculty and administration, the more leadership roles teachers seem willing to embark upon.

It should be noted at this point that one of the teachers interviewed was motivated to act several years ago because of the amount of turbulence within the school, not because of a positive relationship with his principal. According to his description, very negative relations existed between the building administrators and the faculty. The educational association representatives helped in building that toxic environment. The climate was so poor that teachers were not allowed to ask questions at faculty meetings. Gross (2014) generally defines severe turbulence as a time when there is fear for the entire enterprise, a feeling of crisis. Seeing that the school was in severe turbulence, this teacher decided to involve himself in the educational association and actively work to build positive relationships between faculty and administration. I applaud his motivation to assist in working to find a solution rather than being part of the problem. He helped to deescalate the turbulent situation.

Many of the findings reported have also been noted in the literature, although presented with variations. For example, Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) suggested four guidelines for cultivating teacher leadership and two of those were listed as follows: 1) for those teachers lacking in confidence, listen, support them, and remove barriers and 2) let people know you accept teacher leaders. Crowther et al. (2002) sited four conditions necessary for the development of teacher leaders including: public and professional acceptance of their existence

and active support of principals. Muijs and Harris (2007) found that structural changes of

providing time and professional development would cultivate teacher leadership. They also

stressed the importance of a trusting environment. No literature was found that offered any more

specific behaviors of school administrators needed in order to cultivate teacher leadership.

Ways Teachers Exercise Leadership in Public Secondary Schools

The research supplemental question answered in this section is: In what ways do teachers

exercise leadership in these selected public secondary schools?

Finding

In analyzing the case studies included in this research, the following are ways teachers exercise leadership in these selected public secondary schools: department leaders, team leaders, mentor teachers, cooperating teachers, technology integrators, athletic coaches, co-curricular advisors, extra-curricular advisors, professional development facilitators, participants of various committees, and local educational association leaders.

In order to answer this research question, I collectively analyzed data from all three

schools involved. This included surveys, observations, and interviews of three principals and

seven teachers. Interviewees were of various age levels, years of educational experience, and

from different content areas. Although all interview responses were considered, the specific

questions asked to obtain information pertinent to answering this research question included:

- What does the term "teacher leader" mean to you? Give examples of roles teacher leaders have fulfilled or actions teacher leaders have displayed.
- What opportunities do teachers have to participate in leadership roles at this school?
- What leadership roles do you play?
- Are there other leadership roles you would like to take on?

I will report on the data from participants which have led to my conclusions.

In first considering School W, one teacher, SchWTchr2 identified many of the typical

leadership opportunities available including department chair, committee member, and presenter

during in-service sessions. As an added leadership role, she is an athletic coach and has taken on the challenge of running a leadership group with student athletes. This group, which meets during the school day's activity period, has athletes from all sports and works to develop student leadership, building morale both on the team and within the school. Another formal leadership position she has held is mentor teacher. SchWTchr2 noted, "Although I was actually a mentor two years prior, I continue to touch base with my mentee weekly." This statement indicates the compassion and commitment this teacher leader has and shows to others. As a more informal leadership role (although she defined it as an encourager rather than a leader), SchWTchr2 is an "occasional gifter."

> Since I like to bake, I often provide baked goods to my colleagues as a way to provide moral support.

According to SchWTchr3, teachers have opportunities to be involved in the school's improvement team, may serve as department heads, and also may serve on subcommittees with school board members. This teacher leader serves on the School Improvement Team which is specific to that individual building, but also wrote the special education plan for the entire district. When asked why she plays leadership roles within her school and district, SchWTchr3 offered the following.

> Different voices need to be heard. Sometimes, the special education voice is not represented.

Her desire is to be the voice of balance. Often, she will first watch to see who volunteers for various committees and, if she feels that the representation is not diverse, she will join the group in order to ensure all students have equitable representation.

Another teacher, SchWTchr1, defined the term teacher leader as follows. "A teacher leader is an individual who leads from the ranks of being a teacher. They are able to guide others

and create change." He was very focused on the positive aspect of teacher leaders, indicating he expected this guidance to be in a positive manner since "negativity just begets more negativity." He felt that teacher leaders were willing to share their experiences and be leaders for each other. He also felt, "Anyone can be a teacher leader if they were willing to do it." This belief is shared in the literature (Reason & Reason, 2011) since numerous types of leaders have been identified. SchWTchr1 was a very humble person, not really seeing himself as a leader, despite the many initiatives he has lead as told to me by his principal. He acknowledged that he looks more to administration for leadership. When asked about the leadership roles he plays, he responded, "I don't feel I play many roles." Upon further probing, however, he admitted that he has been on the School Improvement Team and he was the teacher who trained his colleagues on the new learning management system. SchWTchr1 said that he "selfishly" was involved in choosing and learning the new system because he wanted to know more about it. "Training others on the system is not being a leader; it is just being a colleague."

The principal of School W confirmed the various teacher leadership opportunities that exist in this school. Similar to the teachers, he, too, mentioned opportunities such as department heads, the School Improvement Team which includes regular members and various short-term subcommittee members, the technology team and the comprehensive plan team. In addition, various ad hoc committees operate on a regular basis. According to SchWPrin, the fourteen department heads are depended upon for input regarding scheduling, budget, and professional development, both expressing departmental needs and conducting the actual training. Of note for this school district is that not many K–12 opportunities exist. In fact, had I not asked, it was not even a consideration. SchWPrin brought in the dimension of formal and informal teacher leaders. Formal positions include department chairs or team leaders. Informal teacher

leadership roles include revealing their classroom practice, sharing their expertise, asking questions of colleagues, mentoring new teachers, and modeling how teachers collaborate on issues of practice. York-Barr and Duke (2004) developed domains of teacher leadership practice that also included formal and informal leadership roles.

This principal expressed that he was content with the role teacher leaders were playing describing it as a "healthy culture" that includes diverse faculty members. He appreciates having teacher input. He also acknowledges that when talking informally with others, those teachers involved in decision making can explain the reasons for specific decisions when asked by others.

> It's hard to complain about a decision when the one sitting next to you was involved in making that decision. They can explain the rationale.

Therefore, having more teachers involved helps to enhance the faculty's understanding of decisions. Overall, School W seems to have a good amount of teacher involvement on the building level. Teachers serve as department heads, committee members, teacher mentors, and coaches; roles that are typically mentioned in the research (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996; Poekert, 2012; York-Barr and Duke, 2004).

Teacher leadership opportunities at School B were very similar to those of School W, with minor perspective differences. For example, when asked about the leadership roles he plays at this school, SchBTchr1 did not initially talk about his role as Dean of Students. Instead, he focused on the importance of modeling for students.

> I model the behavior I expect to see. I am honest and fair with students.

When asked why he plays leadership roles, SchBTchr1 then offered that he moved into the Dean of Students role because he felt stagnant professionally and he wanted to have a positive effect on as many students as possible. Thus, an important leadership role for SchBTchr1 was that of being a model to students and the school community.

When asked about leadership roles she plays, SchBTchr2 mentioned a number of roles both within the school and on the district level. Her roles included curriculum committee member, diversity committee member, mentor teacher, and coach. Notable here is this female is a volunteer coach on a male varsity athletic team. While schools often see males coaching female athletes, it is somewhat rare in this area to see females coaching male sports teams.

SchBTchr2 saw teacher leaders as those who contribute a voice within the school. She described that voice as follows.

> Teachers have a voice in policy, in class, or in the district as a whole. At the middle school, they have input on the schedule and different ways of disciplining.

They have a number of opportunities in this school including participating in team meetings, running various activities, and district level curriculum committees. In this school, teachers organize and facilitate a number of student activities including the academic awards banquet, the technology fair, and a mile run that involves all students. SchBTchr2 described these events and felt that teachers had many opportunities to "showcase their talents."

SchBPrin confirmed the opportunities that exist for teachers to demonstrate leadership. He named various ways teacher leaders are involved including several that were mentioned by his teachers, such as leaders of extra-curricular events, curriculum committee members, and technology integrators. He sees teachers contributing in leadership roles academically and in organizing extra-curricular events. SchBPrin described a team leader program he has where each team selects a leader who meets with the principal for monthly meetings. The leader serves as a liaison between the team and the principal and is selected by the team. Since the team selects, the team leader could change each year.

> At the monthly meetings, we brainstorm and problem solve. They gather data and bring their concerns.

SchBPrin noted that the teacher facilitators of many of the district level curriculum committees are from the middle school this year. This was viewed as a positive since it indicated that a number of his teachers were willing to undertake district-level leadership roles. Because they are so involved already, he had no other areas where he would like to see teachers be involved in a leadership capacity.

In School R, both SchRTchr1 and SchRTchr2 acknowledged that their school district has numerous opportunities for teachers to lead. SchRTchr1 has been involved in various committees and has served as a mentor teacher. SchRTchr2 explained in more depth some of the numerous opportunities teachers had to be involved in leadership roles within this school and school district. Specifically, he named several of the building and district level committees, but also mentioned athletic coaching and extra-curricular activities. Some of these committees or groups offered to teachers in School R are long-term (e.g., School Improvement Planning Team, monthly Advisory Council meetings with the Principal or Assistant Superintendent, etc.) and some are more short-term (e.g., Effective Educator Transition team which helped implement the new state law in education, interview teams for hiring new teachers and administrators, etc.).

The additional leadership role that SchRTchr2 would like to undertake is to move into administration. He had begun his studies in that area years before, but left because he felt he was too young in his teaching career to have the credibility needed to be a principal. Now, with ten years of teaching experience, he has enrolled in another principal certification program. Both Danielson (2006) and Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) also emphasized the importance of excelling in classroom teaching before aspiring to lead other teachers. SchRTchr2's major hindrance currently pertains to family and time constraints. With three young children, he does not feel he can add much more to his already full plate.

SchRPrin confirmed the various opportunities for teacher involvement in this school and included the opportunity to work to build a school/community relationship. The principal was clear that she views the teachers as the experts in the field, ones who often bring new ideas to her. She tries to encourage those ideas and support them whenever possible. Thus, roles of teacher leadership may vary. In analyzing data from the principal and both teacher participants in School R, teacher leaders in this school take active roles in various school and district-level committees, coach athletic teams, and volunteer for other co-curricular events.

With very little difference, the answers coming from all three schools were very consistent. Teacher leaders are evident as department heads, team leaders, mentor teachers, cooperating teachers, technology integrators, athletic coaches, co-curricular advisors, extra-curricular advisors, professional development facilitators, participants of various committees, and local educational association leaders. The committees may include school level groups, such as a school improvement team, or district level committees, such as a curriculum or interview committee. The commitments to these leadership roles may be long-term, lasting for several years, or short-term, lasting for a school year or less. Teacher leaders may also present at professional development sessions, again on a school or district level. In some instances, teacher leaders developed their own ideas or projects they wanted to lead. For example, one school had a teacher who developed a memorial path honoring fallen veterans. Another developed a mile run for students to support fitness and this run has continued for years. Teacher leadership roles may vary as much as do schools (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). The main difference in the leadership roles described from these three schools was in relation to the number of opportunities available on a district level. While two of the schools mentioned several leadership opportunities

at the district level, one school had very minimal options outside of that actual school. Overall, the opportunities within each school setting were very similar.

Specific Characteristics of Teacher Leaders in Public Secondary Schools

The research supplemental question answered in this section is: What are some of the specific characteristics of teacher leaders in these selected public secondary schools?

Finding

In analyzing the case studies included in this research, the following are specific characteristics of teacher leaders in these selected public secondary schools: good communication skills, influential with others, problem solvers, and approachable.

In order to answer this research question, I collectively analyzed data from all three schools involved. This included surveys, observations and interviews of three principals and seven teachers. Interviewees were of various age levels, years of educational experience, and from different content areas. Although all interview responses were considered, the specific questions asked to obtain information pertinent to answering this research question included:

- What does the term "teacher leader" mean to you?
- In reflecting on those you consider to be "teacher leaders", what characteristics do those individuals display?

I will report on the data from participants which have led to my conclusions.

The principal of School W (SchWPrin) is a male in the 33-43 year old range who has been an educator for 20 years, eight as a teacher and 12 as an administrator. He has been the principal of this suburban public high school for the past nine years. SchWPrin distinguished teacher leaders into two types, direct leaders and indirect leaders. Direct leaders, he believes, either follow the administrative vision or they intrinsically know where they want to go educationally.

> They influence others to move them toward the goal through helping them instructionally, providing encouragement, affirmation, and support.

He describes indirect teacher leaders this way.

> Indirect teacher leaders are the ones who model and set examples for others. They do it consistently and they do it well. They, too, are influential.

Ackerman and Mackenzie (2006) defined this concept more as formal and informal leaders.

SchWPrin gave an example of how teacher leaders in elective departments often operate differently than those in core areas. In public schools, students must take the core subjects; therefore, those teachers are confident they will have full classrooms each year. However, "Teachers in elective areas must be like salespeople, selling their department and the classes in it so that students will enroll." SchWPrin referenced a teacher I would be interviewing and told how that teacher will come to the principal with ideas on how to further his department. "Teacher leaders," expressed this principal, "are able to influence others toward a common vision."

In contemplating the characteristics of those considered to be teacher leaders, SchWPrin used two terms: consistency and communication. Regarding consistency, he said, "You could count on them, always knowing what to expect." Regarding communication, SchWPrin specified the following.

> The teacher leader must be able to communicate horizontally, articulating the what, why, and how to colleagues. They must be able to think on their feet. As the principal, I have positional authority and, thus, can influence through that position. However, teacher leaders must be able to communicate with their colleagues in such a way as to provide the influence needed to move them toward the common goal.

Both influence and communication skills are frequently mentioned in the literature as being associated with teacher leaders (Boes & Halsall, 2009; Collinson, 2012; Katzenmeyer & Moyer, 1996).

When asked to define the term teacher leader, a teacher from School W, SchWTchr1, described a teacher who guides others and creates change. "A teacher leader is an individual who leads from the ranks of being a teacher. They are able to guide others and create change." He was very focused on the positive aspect, indicating he expected this guidance to be in a positive manner since "negativity just begets more negativity." He felt that teacher leaders were willing to share their experiences and be leaders for each other. He also felt, "Anyone can be a teacher leader if they were willing to do it." This belief is shared in the literature (Reason & Reason, 2011) since numerous types of leaders have been identified. SchWTchr1 was a very humble leader. Collinson (2012) talked about finding teacher leaders to be humble. Humility helps teachers to recognize that they can learn from everyone and from every experience. Taking risks and making mistakes can also be a way to learn and it is important to ask for help when necessary. This concept correlates directly with the views and actions of this teacher leader.

SchWTchr1 named the following as specific characteristics of teacher leaders: patient, confident, empathetic, and good communicator. Since he views change as something that happens slowly, patience was certainly needed. This teacher also felt that teacher leaders have an understanding of boundaries.

Another teacher from this school, SchWTchr2, described a teacher leader as follows, "A teacher leader is someone to look up to, someone you could feel comfortable going to with issues or concerns." Discussing specific characteristics, she said, "A main characteristic of a teacher leader includes a warm, caring personality that is displayed to both adults and students." She also stressed that teacher leaders are positive and "won't roll their eyes and say 'another thing to do'."

The final teacher interviewed from School W (SchWTchr3) is a 22 year veteran teacher in the 44-64 year old range with seven years in this particular school. SchWTchr3 defines teacher leader as follows.

> Someone who provides insight, ideas, and information from a ground level view. They are teachers who have a collegial relationship with faculty members that administrators may not have. Teacher leaders guide others through change and serve as a liaison between faculty and administration.

SchWTchr3 mentioned characteristics for teacher leaders that included being outgoing, having good communication skills, being open minded, willing to try new ideas, and able to interact with large groups, as opposed to just their departments.

Overall, responses from School W acknowledged that teachers can indirectly lead by simply being role models to others and all of them mentioned the need to be positive. Although negative people can lead others, these participants clearly spoke about positive leaders. The importance of a positive attitude was identified in the research (Boes & Halsall, 2009; Reason & Reason, 2011). The teacher leader characteristics that surfaced most in this school were identified as follows: influential, good communicator, positive, consistent in responses, empathetic, and open minded.

A teacher in School R, SchRTchr1, was interviewed following an observation of him during a committee meeting. This identified teacher leader had not spoken during the committee meeting. Despite his 19 years of educational experience, 15 in this school, he did not add to the conversation of the School Improvement Planning Team. As we began our interview, one of the first things he told me is that he is uncomfortable being interviewed and speaking in front of adults. Despite this, he is now and has been on numerous committees both within the school and the school district. In describing a teacher leader, SchRTchr1 said, "A teacher leader is someone the less experienced teachers look up to. It is someone who aspires to greatness and participates

in various committees." He believed that "unlike myself," teacher leaders characteristically do not mind speaking in front of a crowd and they willingly go the extra mile, doing what it takes to get the job done.

Another teacher from School R, SchRTchr2's only verbal contribution to the team meeting was under "other matters" where he willingly expressed an alternate idea to the School Improvement Planning Team. SchRTchr2 defined "teacher leader" as follows.

> A teacher leader is someone who carries the weight for the staff. This person is approachable by teachers, students, and sometimes even administrators.

A teacher leader, in SchRTchr2's viewpoint, is either chosen or volunteers to sit on various committees and works to contribute meaningfully to the conversation in order to develop a better school community. Hearing SchRTchr2 comment that the teacher leader is approachable "sometimes even" to administrators immediately brought the thought that while there may be some distributed leadership in this school, I questioned whether there was mutual trust, a tenet of parallel leadership. As our interview continued, I asked about the characteristics of teacher leaders. SchRTchr2 used the following descriptors to define teacher leaders.

> Teacher leaders are approachable. They are good listeners and vocal when necessary. They have a good feel for the group. Teacher leaders are strong decision makers. They are humble and willing to take a stance even if it is not popular. They communicate opinions. They also buy into consensus.

He also distinguished that the expectation is for a teacher leader to value education and be positive, acknowledging that in the past some of the teachers who were leading at this school were not very positive. In fact, they were creating an environment he described as "toxic."

SchRPrin has been involved with public education for 26 years, 8 as a teacher and 18 as an administrator. She has been the principal of School R for ten years. SchRPrin described "teacher leader" in the following manner.

A teacher leader is one who influences others in a positive manner. It is someone who puts students first. Teachers could lead in academic areas, in creating a positive school culture, or simply have a positive influence on students. They make a positive difference in the school community.

It would be important to note at this point that this research is focused on those who lead in a positive way. While I had not discussed that notion with SchRPrin, we both acknowledged that some may lead in a negative manner, causing tension and turbulence within the school setting. However, the focus in this study is to determine how to cultivate positive leaders. In reviewing the literature, most authors talk about teacher leadership resulting in positive change. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) talk about teacher leaders influencing others to improve educational practice, as do York-Barr and Duke (2004) and Poekert (2012). Crowther et al. (2002, 2009) talk about the power of teacher leadership and how it contributes to school success and to the quality of life of the community. While some leaders may try to influence in a negative manner, this research is focused on how to bring about positive change

When asked to state the characteristics of teacher leaders, SchRPrin said, "They influence others and I hope it's positive." She also described teacher leaders as problem solvers and people who have out-of-the-box ideas. She viewed them as "well-respected" within the school community. Overall, research participants from School R described the characteristics displayed by teacher leaders as approachable, willing to be a voice, good listener, consensus builder, influential, and problem-solver.

Shifting the focus to School B, SchBTchr1 views teacher leaders as role models and feels they are extremely important at the middle school level.

You have to be a role model for the behavior you want. You must demand the same behavior of the students as you demand of yourself.

He sees teacher leaders characteristically as people who are flexible (willing to look at things in different ways), able to command attention of others, respected, models of how they want the students to behave, good communicators, and willing to "own" decisions and behaviors. "Teacher leaders are flexible. They look at different ways to teach and to get students to take ownership." SchBTchr1 really focused on the modeling with and for peers and students as one of the biggest roles teacher leaders have in this setting. He stressed the importance of modeling within the classroom and school setting. Relying on his background as a counselor and now Dean of Students, he talked about how he treated students fairly and listened to them, again modeling expected behavior. In a final reflection on teacher leadership, SchBTchr1 said, "People need to take chances. They need to plan it and own it. Be willing to accept constructive feedback. I rely on my coaching background in my job. I do what I do, but I really don't call myself a leader." His humble attitude was showing.

Another teacher from School B, SchBTchr2, described the characteristics of teacher leaders as follows.

> They are people who lead by example and, in this school, most are not afraid to speak up even if it is not politically correct. Teacher leaders are selfless people who are looking out for what is best for all, especially the students. They are risk takers.

She went on to say that many of those who take leadership roles may not necessarily be the most well-liked on the faculty. However, they are ones who are doing what they feel is best for the school, the district, and the students.

The principal of School B (SchBPrin) is a male in the 33-43 year old range who has been an educator for 15 years, five as a teacher and 10 as an administrator. He is in the third year as principal of this suburban public middle school. As a strong proponent of teacher leadership, he defines a teacher leader as follows.

A teacher leader is one who takes leadership roles within the faculty and is comfortable building relationships with peers. Teacher leaders are respected among their colleagues. These teachers are known as good at their craft, thus having the buy-in from other faculty members.

The principal of School B went on to describe characteristics of teacher leaders to be as follows.

They are people who are open and good listeners, not talkers. Administrators like to talk and that may turn teachers off. They are organized and they get the job done and done well. Teacher leaders are approachable, and they contribute to meaningful decisions.

Characteristically in School B, respondents described teacher leaders as role models, respected, flexible, approachable, good listeners, and people who get the job accomplished. They feel valued and are willing to work on things that are meaningful to the school – its students and faculty.

One question this research focused on was "What are some of the specific characteristics of teacher leaders in these selected public secondary schools?" Despite the fact that the schools utilized in this research included two high schools and one middle school and spanned two different counties, the responses were very similar. Most participants mentioned that teacher leaders have good communication skills. Although many used the actual word "communication," some merely referenced it. Specific responses included: teacher leaders must have good listening skills; teacher leaders must have the ability to communicate to a group, especially a group of their peers. Participants also talked about the "voice" of teacher leaders, sometimes using the word literally and sometimes figuratively. In the literal interpretation, they talked about teacher leaders using their voice to speak up during meetings or if something was not going well. Figuratively speaking, voice was used to provide one more dimension when trying to solve a problem. "Influential" was another descriptor frequently used and one that tied directly into other terms used such as communicator, role model, and problem solver. The research is rich in describing teacher leaders as ones who influence their colleagues (Crowther et

al., 2002, 2009; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996; Poekert, 2012; Reason & Reason, 2011; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teacher leaders were frequently described as problem solvers who were able to do so by building consensus, characteristics also found by Ault (2009). They work long hours to ensure a good environment for the students and staff. In two of the three schools, interviewees mentioned the idea of focusing on people who are positive leaders. Although it was acknowledged that there have been leaders who are negative, this research was focusing on positive leaders. Fortunately, the interviewees felt the same. Thus, additional terms used to describe characteristics of teacher leaders included positive terminology such as: approachable, well respected, patient, confident, empathetic, warm, caring, positive, and flexible.

Benefits of Teacher Leadership in Public Secondary Schools

The research supplemental question answered in this section is: Of student and teacher benefits, what extent, if any, appear to be related to teacher leadership in these selected schools?

Finding

In analyzing the case studies included in this research, the following are specific student and teacher benefits that appear to be related to teacher leadership:
- *Utilization of teacher leaders creates a more collegial atmosphere, thus enhancing the climate and culture of the school for both teachers and students.*
- *The collegial school atmosphere creates a more positive learning environment for students.*
- *Teacher learning is enhanced since teachers may believe they learn better from other teachers.*
- *Decisions made will be enhanced since more voices with different perspectives will be considered.*

To determine the answer to this research question, I collectively analyzed data from all three schools involved. This included surveys, observations and interviews of three principals and seven teachers. Interviewees were of various age levels, years of educational experience, and from different content areas. Although all interview responses were considered, the specific

questions asked in the interviews to obtain information pertinent to answering this research question included:

- How might your school benefit from having teachers in various leadership roles?
- In thinking of yourself or other teachers who have taken on leadership roles, what benefits have resulted for the school? The teachers? The Students? Others?

Regarding benefits of teacher leadership, SchRTchr1 believed that the students benefitted when teachers from all different departments helped to make school-wide decisions. Gross (1998, 2004) has talked about positionality in his research and that concept seems pertinent to SchRTchr1's thought process. That is, the problems and solutions take on different forms depending on the background and interests of the persons involved, depending on the view from your position within the school. Thus, if teachers with different backgrounds and perspectives could all contribute to important school decision-making, the solutions should be better for the entire school community. SchRTchr1 described the benefits as follows.

> The decisions are made with almost all subject perspectives looking at the same problem. All kids will benefit from the decisions.

Although he noted no concrete benefits of teacher leadership, another School R teacher, SchRTchr2, did indicate that you could not put a specific value on the benefits to the students when the school climate is positive. He noted, "Kids benefit when teachers buy in. You can't put a value on what buy-in provides." When he began teaching in this school, he felt there was a real divide between faculty and administration and he, along with others in the educational association, worked to create positive relations. He talked about helping develop guidelines regarding how both sides would approach each other. As a teacher leader, SchRTchr2 had a personal mission of changing the school climate to a positive one. While the "morale was low 6-7 years ago," the school climate was now viewed as "drastically improved" at least in part due to the efforts of teacher leaders.

Overall, the principal of School R felt that teacher leadership enhances the school by creating a positive environment. She felt it is essential to creating a positive school culture. While no specific, measurable benefits pertaining to student learning outcomes can be noted, participants at School R believe that including the input of teacher leaders results in better decisions made due to the diversity of the voices. Thus, this in turn will lead to a more positive school climate.

At School W, SchWTchr1 described the benefits of teacher leadership as follows.

Despite the fact that teachers can learn from administrators, learning from other teachers is "invaluable."

He felt that teachers who are also in the classroom every day could better understand other teachers. SchWTchr2 supported that claim as she also described teacher leader benefits as mainly pertaining to those from teacher to teacher. She believes that those who are currently in classrooms better understand others in the classroom. No specific benefits other than the understanding of each other were given. When asked about benefits to students, SchWTchr2 felt it was good for teachers to work collaboratively since it models the social skills that high school students need.

Teachers working together provides a model for students on how to get along. That's an issue in high school. This provides a social skills model and demonstrates an atmosphere of respect.

SchWTchr3 concurred with these benefits of teacher leadership and again those benefits named were not quantifiable. She expressed the following.

The benefits of teacher leaders include learning from different viewpoints and feeling good about the fact that you were heard. This leads to more well-rounded programs and teachers having better attitudes about their positions. Ironically, the teacher reflection model does not allow for reflection time.

This final statement was a direct comment about Pennsylvania's model for teacher evaluation.

SchWPrin acknowledged the benefits to teachers, but portrayed it from a slightly

different angle. He described the difficulty a teacher would have complaining about an issue to

another teacher who helped make the decision. Additionally, with teachers being part of the

decision making process, they have a better understanding of the issues and get to explain it to

their peers. To summarize responses from School W, the largest benefit to teacher leadership

was viewed as the idea that all different voices are heard and diverse opinions contribute to

making the final decision.

In School B, SchBTchr1 appreciated teacher leadership because he felt students could

then see teachers in a different light if they played different roles. "Teachers can grow through

leadership roles. Teachers helping teachers can make for a better school environment."

Another School B Teacher, SchBTchr2, described the benefits of teacher leaders as it

pertained to voice.

> A main benefit of including the voice of teachers is that teachers have good insight as to
> what is going on and how the school can run more smoothly. Teachers, because of their
> relationships with students, also have a great understanding of the community. For
> schools to best operate, all facets –school, parents, and community – need to work
> together.

She then expanded upon her thought that this school district is "missing the community in our

schools." This was explained not that the district doesn't value community input, but more that

"There is a bigger proportion of our community that doesn't value education."

When asked for his thoughts regarding the benefits of teacher leadership, SchBPrin

offered the following.

> Teacher leadership enhances the school because teachers listen to other teachers. Since
> teacher leaders are still within the classroom, when they teach, model, or talk about
> something new, they can show how it is manageable within the classroom setting. While
> administrators may give the same message, they are not performing the same job as
> teachers.

While the benefits given were not quantifiable, the participants from School B all see a benefit in having teachers serve in leadership positions because doing so creates a more positive school environment. Students benefit in seeing teachers working collaboratively and the behavior that collaboration models. Teachers benefit in learning from other teachers, people who do the same job.

This question of how teacher leadership benefits teachers and students seemed to have the least quantifiable data since all responses were based upon the feelings of the individuals, without any specific data providing support. The respondents mainly focused on the benefits to teachers and believed that teachers learn best from other teachers. While administrators were viewed as valuable, teachers believe other teachers who are performing the job within the classroom can best teach them since they better understand the job requirements. These comments were also verified in the literature. Muijs and Harris (2003) found teacher leadership to be powerful because it is premised upon the creation of collegial norms in schools that evidence has shown contribute directly to school effectiveness, improvement, and development; it recognizes that teachers' ability to lead has a significant influence upon the quality of relationships and teaching within the school; it offers a new type of professionalism based upon mutual trust, recognition, empowerment, and support; and it reclaims school leadership from the individual to the collective. Others finding the most positive effects on the teachers themselves included York-Barr and Duke (2004) and Poekert (2012) who believe that teacher leadership is essentially a form of job-embedded professional development.

Another area of benefit was in relation to having a diverse group giving input into decisions that would impact the school. For example, one school was told they would lose twenty instructional minutes when the school district changed times to accommodate bus runs.

The principal convened a diverse group of teachers to provide input into how best to restructure the daily schedule. Although the change never did occur, the building was prepared because they had many voices providing input. During this research process, I was frequently reminded of Gross' (1998, 2004) turbulence theory and the idea of positionality. Basically, including a number of stakeholders from various backgrounds and viewpoints will assist in providing information from all aspects so that the best decision can be made. The view of the problem and how serious it is may be different depending on the angle (the position) of the teacher. Some might see the problem as having only mild impact, while others may view it as more serious. Having decisions made with a multitude of teacher leaders will result in a more positive school climate and, hopefully, a better learning environment for the students.

Those interviewed for this research felt that students benefited from teachers serving in a leadership capacity; however, when asked for specifics as to how students benefitted, the answers pertained more to the climate of the school and the model of professionals working collaboratively. No one mentioned any direct impact on test scores or any type of increased learning for students. Again, this is supported in the research as Harris (2004) stated that clear links with improved student outcomes have yet to be established. The focus was on the collaborative sharing of instructional strategies and knowledge by teachers. Teachers learning from other teachers was described as invaluable. The assumption of those interviewed is that student learning would increase if teachers had additional instructional strategies in their arsenal and the school climate was positive.

Summary

This research was conducted to determine how to cultivate teacher leadership in public secondary schools. As a result of it, I was able to determine answers to both the focal research question as well as each of the three supplemental questions.

The main research question was "How can teacher leadership be cultivated in public secondary schools? More specifically, what actions of selected school administrators seem related to encouraging the cultivation of teacher leaders?" In analyzing the case studies included in this research, the following were identified as specific actions of school administrators that seem to cultivate teacher leadership.

- Demonstrate confidence in the teacher's abilities when completing meaningful work and provide support, encouragement, and resources (including time) needed to complete the task.

- Have open, honest, and frequent communication between administrators and teachers.

- Be consistent in actions and responses so that teachers develop trust in administrators.

In all three schools studied, when the principals demonstrated these actions, the teachers responded positively. The first point above seemed crucial, with the next two points providing support. That is, when the principal demonstrated confidence in the teacher's abilities, s/he was more willing to complete the task. The work also had to be meaningful so as not to be a waste of the teacher's time. Additionally, providing support, encouragement, and resources (including time) needed to complete the task showed that the principal was invested in helping the teacher succeed. As the principal communicated regularly with the teachers, trust was developed and expectations were clear.

A research supplemental question was "In what ways do teachers exercise leadership in these selected public secondary schools?" In analyzing the case studies included in this research, the following are ways teachers exercise leadership in these selected public secondary schools: department leaders, team leaders, mentor teachers, cooperating teachers, technology integrators, athletic coaches, co-curricular advisors, extra-curricular advisors, professional development facilitators, participants of various committees, and local educational association leaders. With very little variation, formal leadership roles were consistent across all three schools and correlated to the literature. Informally, the roles varied with the school in order to meet the needs of that school.

A second research supplemental question was "What are some of the specific characteristics of teacher leaders in these selected public secondary schools?" In analyzing the case studies included in this research, the following are specific characteristics of teacher leaders in these selected public secondary schools: good communication skills, influential with others, problem solvers, and approachable. Again, the responses were consistent among all three schools included in this research and correlated to the literature. Although many descriptors were provided, I listed them together in broader categories for better understanding of each.

The final research supplemental question was "Of student and teacher benefits, what extent, if any, appear to be related to teacher leadership in these selected schools?" In analyzing the case studies included in this research, the following are student and teacher benefits that appear to be related to teacher leadership:

- Utilization of teacher leaders creates a more collegial atmosphere, thus enhancing the climate and culture of the school for both teachers and students.

- The collegial school atmosphere creates a more positive learning environment for students.

- Teacher learning is enhanced since teachers may believe they learn better from other teachers.

- Decisions made will be enhanced since more voices with different perspectives will be considered.

While hoping to hear that specific learning outcomes had improved for students, that was not mentioned by any of the research participants. Overall, however, everyone felt positively about the concept of using teachers in various leadership roles. If the learning environment is positive and if teachers are collaborating and sharing instructional practices, one would hope that student learning would increase. However, proving this idea would require an additional research project. For the purposes of this research, uncovering the benefits listed should provide some incentive for principals to want to cultivate teacher leadership within their schools.

In this chapter, I discussed the findings from the data, which relied heavily on the interviews conducted. In Chapter 5, I analyze these findings and use a metaphor as a lens to further understand them.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I first discuss the analysis of the actions of building principals which may help to cultivate teacher leadership through the lens of a brain metaphor. I then explain the lessons learned from the study and link them to recommendations. Finally, I discuss suggestions for further study before applying the results of this study to my current practice.

Organizations as Brains: A Metaphor to Understand Teacher Leadership

In Chapter 2, I discussed how Morgan (2006) uses metaphors as a manner of providing insight. When using the brain as a metaphor to consider organizations, he provides insight in three interconnected ways: as information processing brains; as complex learning systems; and as holographic systems combining centralized and decentralized characteristics. In considering expanding school leadership to include teachers, the brain seems to be an appropriate metaphor. What follows is a discussion of how the metaphorical brain relates to the cultivation of teacher leadership.

Throughout history, the brain has been described in various ways, but mainly as an information processing system. It can be very specialized or, as recently described, the brain can be more similar to a hologram (Morgan, 2006). That is, it is possible to create processes where the whole can be encoded in all the parts, so that each and every part represents the whole. Although a very complex organ, brain functioning does not appear to have a center point of control. The brain seems to store and process data in many parts simultaneously. Pattern and order emerge from the process; it is not imposed. In schools where parallel leadership is utilized, there is mutual trust, common goals, and individuals are willing to freely express themselves.

Ideas may come from any person within that organization and rules and procedures are established as a result of the process of running that particular educational program. Thus, the building principal is not the focal point of control, but rather the control may come from various points within the school.

In contemplating how to create learning organizations, Morgan (2006) asked, "How can one design complex systems that are capable of learning in a brain-like way?" He goes on to explain cybernetics which leads to a theory of communication and learning which stresses four key principles:

1. Systems must have the capacity to sense, monitor, and scan significant aspects of their environment.

2. They must be able to relate this information to the operating norms that guide system behavior.

3. They must be able to detect significant deviations from these norms.

4. They must be able to initiate corrective action when discrepancies are detected.

With these four conditions satisfied, a continuous process of information exchange is created between the system and its environment. Consider the main job of a teacher which is to teach children. In my school district, faculty members are provided professional development regarding expectations for the teaching process. For example, teachers are expected to differentiate instruction with students, to provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively, and to use technology as an instructional tool. While the overarching expectations are given and professional training provided, exactly how teachers accomplish the task of teaching children is based upon their own design. Due to each student being unique with individual learning styles and capabilities, each class is then unique. Instructional strategies that

work in one class may not work with another class despite the fact that the instructional content is expected to be the same. Thus, teachers must be able to monitor their environment and react with corrective action when discrepancies occur. Despite the best plans of teachers, they may need to react and implement changes on an ongoing basis. Principals need to trust the teachers and the instructional decisions they are making since they are all focused on obtaining the same goal. With teachers being comfortable in leadership roles, they will also willingly share their learnings with other teachers, hopefully providing benefits to more students than just those within their classroom.

In using the brain metaphor, Morgan (2006) also looked at how organizations learn and discussed single-loop and double-loop learning. Single-loop learning is the ability to detect and correct errors in relation to a given set of operating norms. Double-loop learning depends on being able to take a "double look" at the situation by questioning the relevance of the operating norms. In most bureaucratic systems, single-loop learning is the norm. Since a mission of schools is to create life-long learners, school personnel should undoubtedly also be learning on a regular basis – as individuals and as an organization. In cultivating teacher leaders, especially in a parallel leadership model, teachers are encouraged to express themselves and encouraged to take that second look to detect where faulty thinking may prevail. In functioning like a brain, teachers and administrators are free to find areas needing improvement and offer suggestions as to how to achieve the organization's goals.

The principles of double-loop learning make it clear that in order to learn and change, organizational members must be skilled in understanding the assumptions, frameworks, and norms guiding current activity and be able to challenge and change them when necessary (Morgan, 2006). To do so, the people in the organization must engage in self-reflective

behavior. Again, the brain metaphor is useful in describing the school as an organization since self-reflection is critical for educators. The world around us is constantly changing and we, in turn, must change as professionals. For example, the use of technology as an instructional tool has grown immeasurably in the past several years. It is impossible for one person (e.g., a building principal) to stay current with the vast multitude of products, programs, and software available. Using teacher leaders to assist in weeding through the available programs is yet another way in which to effectively utilize their talents. When mutual trust exists, teacher leaders can offer suggestions as to which technology to use and when to use it. Stated previously, it is a finding of this research that principals must demonstrate confidence in the teacher's abilities when completing meaningful work and provide support, encouragement, and resources needed to complete the task. Morgan (2006) states "For successful double-loop learning to occur, organizations must develop cultures that support change and risk taking" (p. 91). Cultivation of teacher leaders helps in developing a school culture supportive of change and risk taking.

As with any metaphor being used as a lens to view organizational structure, there are strengths and limitations. A main strength of the brain metaphor is that it identifies the requirements of learning organizations in a comprehensive way and focuses on how different elements need to support each other. With this metaphor, leadership needs to be diffused rather than centralized. Although goals, objectives, and targets may be helpful tools, they must be used in a way that avoids the pathologies of single-loop learning. Hierarchy, design, and strategic development must be approached and understood as self-organizing, emergent phenomena (Morgan, 2006).   In a school practicing the tenets of distributed or parallel leadership, teachers help in leading initiatives. The leadership does not stem only from the principal. All are

encouraged to avoid single-loop learning so the focus can be on truly identifying areas needing improvement.

Every aspect of organizational functioning depends on information processing of one form or another (Morgan, 2006). Decisions for each organization, in this case each school, are made based upon numerous factors including available information, school policies and procedures, available resources, personal factors, etc. Teachers make countless decisions each and every day regarding content, instructional strategies, student capabilities – again, with a multitude of options from which to select. Working to educate children is not comparable to building a product on a production line. How students arrive at the school door each morning may vary. Personal feelings and emotions may impact the day. "The greater the uncertainty, the more difficult it is to program and routinize activity by preplanning a response. Thus, as uncertainty increases, organizations typically find ways of controlling outputs (e.g., by setting goals and targets) rather than controlling behaviors (e.g., through rules and programs) and by relying on continuous feedback as a means of control" (Morgan, 2006). Teaching is certainly a field with much uncertainty. Students are more mobile and move-in students regularly change the class composition. English language learners are often an increasing population with which public schools must deal. The more assistance a building principal has by using numerous teacher leaders, the better the decisions made will be since they will incorporate input which is varied.

Just as teacher leaders have all sorts of data, the brain stores data in various parts simultaneously, with patterns and order emerging from the process. In looking at the school organization as an information processing brain, each aspect of the functioning of this organization depends on information processing in one form or another. Using only a single

individual to process all information may cause an organization to be stagnant. Morgan (2006)

ponders how one can design complex systems that are capable of learning in a brain-like way.

To do so, he suggests that learning organizations develop capacities that allow them to do the

following:

- Scan and anticipate change in the wider environment to detect significant variations.

- Develop an ability to question, challenge, and change operating norms and assumptions.

- Allow an appropriate strategic direction and pattern of organization to emerge (p. 87).

Diffusing leadership in the ways presented through the brain metaphor would help the

functioning of the learning organization, that is, the individual school and its students.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The quest to determine how to cultivate teacher leadership is based on the premise that

leadership should not be limited to a select group of teachers. All teachers should be encouraged

to see leadership as a continuum of roles from which they can select, given their own experience,

confidence level, skills, and knowledge (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). In this section, I explain

what I have gleaned from this study and provide recommendations for use in public secondary

schools. The following are the findings I will discuss in this section:

1. Specific actions of school administrators that seem to cultivate teacher leadership
   include:
   - Demonstrate confidence in the teacher's abilities when completing meaningful
     work and provide support, encouragement, and resources (including time) needed
     to complete the task.
   - Have open, honest, and frequent communication between administrators and
     teachers.
   - Be consistent in actions and responses so that teachers develop trust in
     administrators.

2. Ways in which teachers exercise leadership in public secondary schools include:
   department leaders, team leaders, mentor teachers, cooperating teachers, technology

integrators, athletic coaches, co-curricular advisors, extra-curricular advisors, professional development facilitators, participants of various committees, and local educational association leaders.

3. Specific characteristics of teacher leaders in public secondary schools include: good communication skills, influential with others, problem solvers, and approachability.

4. Student and teacher benefits that appear to be related to teacher leadership:
   - Utilization of teacher leaders creates a more collegial atmosphere, thus enhancing the climate and culture of the school for both teachers and students.
   - The collegial school atmosphere creates a more positive learning environment for students.
   - Teacher learning is enhanced since teachers may believe they learn better from other teachers.
   - Decisions made will be enhanced since more voices with different perspectives will be considered.

Finding/Recommendation 1

Specific actions of school administrators that seem to cultivate teacher leadership include:

- *Demonstrate confidence in the teacher's abilities when completing meaningful work and provide support, encouragement, and resources (including time) needed to complete the task.*

- *Have open, honest, and frequent communication between administrators and teachers.*

- *Be consistent in actions and responses so that teachers develop trust in administrators.*

The overarching purpose of this research was to determine which actions of school administrators would cultivate the leadership potential within teachers. In order for a building administrator to cultivate that leadership potential, it is crucial that the above recommendations

are followed. Teachers seem to step into leadership roles at different times and for different reasons. Although one research participant stepped into the role because he felt a need to resolve the conflict in the building, all others indicated they were willing to engage in leadership roles based upon some actions of their building principals. When the principal demonstrates confidence in the abilities of the teachers and provides the support, encouragement, and resources needed, teachers most likely will answer the call. Additionally, when the teachers and principal regularly engage in open and honest communication, teachers again are more willing to be involved in leadership roles. Trust can be a difficult term to describe and, while it takes time to gain the trust of someone, it can very quickly be broken. It is important, then, that building principals be consistent in their actions and responses so teachers know what to expect and trust can be developed.

At times, teachers' personal lives are too busy for them to take on leadership roles and they may sit back and allow others to take the lead. However, if the cause or task is one a teacher strongly supports, s/he will take some role in solving the dilemma. Thus, the task must be meaningful so as not to waste anyone's time.   This cultivation of growing from teacher to teacher leader will evolve over time and will depend on mentoring and coaching not just of the building administrators, but of the other teachers, who will need to accept them in these leadership roles (Baecher, 2012).   As with others, teachers will engage in the leadership role if they believe they are being heard and making a difference.

Finding/Recommendation 2

Ways in which teachers exercise leadership in public secondary schools include:

department leaders, team leaders, mentor teachers, cooperating teachers, technology

integrators, athletic coaches, co-curricular advisors, extra-curricular advisors,

professional development facilitators, participants of various committees, and local

educational association leaders.

Secondary public school teachers in this study exercised leadership in ways that correlated to the literature. Based upon both formal and informal roles as well as instructional, professional development, and their extensive research, York-Barr and Duke (2004) developed domains of teacher leadership practice which included organizational functions. These domains of actual practice were categorized as coordination and management, school or district curriculum work, professional development of colleagues, participation in school change and improvement initiatives, parent and community involvement, contributions to the profession of teachers, and pre-service teacher education. The teacher leaders in this study served in capacities such as department heads, team leaders, mentor teachers, cooperating teachers, technology integrators, athletic coaches, co-curricular advisors, extra-curricular advisors, local educational associations, and on various building or district level committees. Basically, the roles that teachers take on are based upon the needs of the individual building. Thus, the roles may vary as much as do the schools themselves.

Finding/Recommendation 3

Specific characteristics of teacher leaders in public secondary schools include: good

communication skills, influential with others, problem solvers, and approachability.

Investigating the characteristics of teacher leaders, participants of this study frequently mentioned that teacher leaders must have good communication skills, a major component of why they are influential with others. Again, this study supports previous rich research that identified key characteristics of teacher leaders. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) found that teachers need to be prepared in order to be effective in influencing others and that their power for influence came from personal characteristics and expertise. York-Barr and Duke (2004) indicated that teacher leaders have significant teaching experience and are known as excellent teachers, thus giving them respect from their colleagues. Ault's work (2009) found very similar results to this study concluding that characteristics of teacher leaders included the ability to build personal relationships and the ability to problem-solve through periods of conflicting demands. In this qualitative study, participants further described teacher leader characteristics as communicators, role models, problem solvers, approachable, well-respected, patient, confident, empathetic, warm, caring, positive, and flexible. From this terminology, it is evident that teacher leaders are very well-respected by both their peers and their building administrators.

Finding/Recommendation 4

Student and teacher benefits that appear to be related to teacher leadership:

- *Utilization of teacher leaders creates a more collegial atmosphere, thus enhancing the climate and culture of the school for both teachers and students.*

- *The collegial school atmosphere creates a more positive learning environment for students.*

- *Teacher learning is enhanced since teachers may believe they learn better from other teachers.*

- *Decisions made will be enhanced since more voices with different perspectives will be considered.*

To summarize the benefits from utilizing teacher leaders, one must separate the benefits to teachers from the benefits to students. Regarding the benefits to teachers, respondents in this study, both teachers and administrators, believed that teachers learn best from other teachers, therefore making teacher leaders invaluable when teachers provide professional development for other teachers. Since teachers have a different perspective than administrators, teacher leadership in committee work was also viewed as a must. These findings correlate with those of Muijs and Harris (2003) who found teacher leadership to be powerful because it is premised upon the creation of collegial norms in schools. That collegiality contributes directly to school effectiveness, improvement, and development. Additional findings of Muijs and Harris (2003) include the power of teacher leadership because of the significant influence upon the quality of relationships and teaching within the school.

Although no direct impact of teacher leadership was connected to students, all participants felt students do benefit from utilization of this concept. All assumed that learning would increase if the school climate was positive, which was also identified by Muijs and Harris (2003). However, no mention was made of any direct impact on test scores.   Harris (2004) reported that despite a wealth of school improvement literature advocating more collaborative, democratic, and distributed forms of leadership, clear links with improved student outcomes have not been established. Regardless of specific data to prove increased academic learning, it is logical to want the school climate to be positive for students. Enough pressures exist for teenagers without having to attend a school that does not have a positive climate.

Implications for Further Research

In this study, findings and recommendations were gleaned by using three different secondary schools as individual case studies. All participants actually scored on a survey in a way which indicated they believed in the concept of teacher leadership. One question that arose is, "Would the research results be different if the teachers and administrators included had scored in a way that indicated they really did not support the teacher leadership concept?" In the two schools with the largest teacher participation, some teachers who scored high declined an interview while others who score lower indicated they would have participated in the research. It would be interesting to see if the overall results differed had a different population been interviewed.

Another concept to further explore pertains to the principal and his/her leadership style. Questions to determine that answer include, "Do you engage in more leadership roles with this principal than previous ones? Why or why not?" In one school used as a case study, it was evident from both the teachers and the principal that it had taken all ten of the principal's years in that school to build trust and develop teacher willingness to take on various leadership roles. In another school, the teachers indicated a trusting relationship with the current principal in his two short years there, but mentioned that things were different under a previous administration. Further research on the specific qualities of the principal would assist in teacher leadership development programs.

Personal Connections

In serving as a building principal, I have always believed that using the collective brain power of the teachers is far better than relying on my individual ability to make all the decisions

for a school. Teachers have such vast knowledge and strengths in areas that may be different from what I possess. We each stand in a different position and look at situations through a different lens. My search has always been to find the best way to tap into that knowledge and those strengths and use teachers as leaders within their settings. Throughout the years, I have tried to provide encouragement and support so that teachers would take the lead in various areas. My personal beliefs coincide with the findings in this research. While teachers will take leadership roles at various times and for various reasons, they will more likely take on those roles for a person they trust. As one knows, trust takes time to develop and one small misstep could easily erode it.

When this process began, I embraced what I found in the literature. It was important to me to see findings from scholars in the education field. The idea of distributed leadership was one I believed in. However, when I found a more specific version of distributed leadership, parallel leadership, those tenets provided even more clarity. The real benefit, though, came through conducting the research. In learning the intricacies of three different schools through surveys, interviews, and observations, I was able to formulate a deeper understanding of what principal actions seem to encourage teachers to awaken the leader within and I appreciated having this experience.

Conclusion

The main learning for me throughout this process is that there are specific actions of principals which will cultivate teacher leaders. Specifically, principals must demonstrate confidence in the teacher's abilities when completing meaningful work and principals must provide support, encouragement, and resources needed to complete the task. The work must be

meaningful since teachers are busy people. Communication must be frequent, open, and honest. A principal always needs to be conscious that what he or she says to teachers will be remembered. Their words and actions matter and, much like an athletic coach, they can help or hinder a teacher. In today's society where an increasing amount of expectations are placed on educators and more pressures emerge from state assessments, it is imperative that we all work together not only for our own benefit, but certainly for that of our students.

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SELF-SURVEY OF PRELIMINARY LEADERSHIP PERCEPTIONS

Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership Perceptions

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the initial stages of this case study research regarding teacher leadership. The research is ultimately looking to identify ways in which teacher leadership can be cultivated. This survey will determine the selection of two or three participants from your school who will then participate in an interview to further investigate their thoughts on the topic. Again, my sincere thanks to you for your participation in this project. *Janet M. May*

Name _____ School _____ Date_____

Subject(s) Taught_____ Gender_____ Ethnicity_____

Years of Teaching Experience_____ Years Teaching in this School_____

Age Range (Circle one) 22 - 32   33 - 43   44 - 64

Would you be willing to be interviewed? (Circle one)   yes   no

Please carefully read each statement below and determine your level of agreement with the statement. Place an X on the line below the feeling that best aligns with your thoughts for each statement. All responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Respond to the statements below	*Strongly Disagree*	*Disagree*	*No Opinion*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
Teaching is as important as any other profession.					
Part of being a teacher is influencing the educational ideas of other teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders.					
Teachers should be recognized for trying new teaching strategies whether or not they succeed.					

Teachers should participate actively in educational policy making.				
Good teaching involves observing, and providing feedback to fellow teachers.				
Administrators are a potential source of facilitative assistance for teachers.				
Teachers are responsible for encouraging a school-wide approach to teaching, learning, and assessment.				
Teachers can continue with classroom instruction and, at the same time, be school leaders.				
Teachers should allocate time to help plan school-wide professional development activities.				
Teachers should know how organizations work and be effective at getting things done within them.				
Mentoring new teachers is part of the professional responsibility of a teacher.				
An active role in decision making about instructional materials, allocation of learning resources, and student assignments is one of a teacher's responsibilities.				
An educational leader should convey optimism to students, colleagues, and parents.				
Teaching means standing up for all students, including those who are				

marginalized and disadvantaged.					
Teachers have knowledge and skills that can help their fellow teachers succeed with students, and these should be incorporated in professional development efforts.					

SOURCE: Developing Teacher Leaders: How Teacher Leadership Enhances School Success (Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2009, p. 111 – 113).

APPENDIX B

SCORING PROTOCOL FOR THE SELF-SURVEY

OF PRELIMINARY LEADERSHIP PERCEPTIONS

Name _____

School _____   Date   _____

Scored by_____   Date   _____

1. Count the number of times *strongly disagree* was chosen. Multiply by -2 and write the number here: _____

2. Count the number of times *disagree* was chosen. Multiply by -1 and write the number here: _____

3. Ignore the number of times *no opinion* was chosen.

4. Count the number of times *agree* was chosen. Write the number here: _____

5. Count the number of times *strongly agree* was chosen. Multiply by 2 and write the number here: _____

6. Find the sum of the above numbers and write it here: _____

Key: If the total points on line 6 equal…

21 – 30 – Virtually all of the respondent's attitudes, values, and beliefs align with the tenets of teacher leadership and parallel leadership.

11 – 20 – The majority of the respondent's attitudes, values, and beliefs align with the tenets of teacher leadership and parallel leadership.

1 – 10 – Some of the respondent's attitudes, values, and beliefs align with the tenets of teacher leadership and parallel leadership. Several don't.

Less than 1 – Few of the respondent's attitudes, values, and beliefs align with the tenets of teacher leadership and parallel leadership.

Responders scoring between 21 and 30 points will be considered as candidates for participation in the case study. Those scoring 20 points or less will not be considered as candidates for this study.

SOURCE: Developing Teacher Leaders: How Teacher Leadership Enhances School Success (Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2009, p. 110 – 114).

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION FOR SURVEY USE FROM DR. FRANK CROWTHER, AUTHOR

From: Frank Crowther <Frank.Crowther@usq.edu.au>
To: Janet May <JMMay@wyasd.k12.pa.us>
Date: 4/30/2013 10:11 PM
Subject: RE: Teacher Leaders

Thanks Janet. Your doctoral work is exciting and will, I predict, yield excellent outcomes.

By all means use the Self Survey instrument. I normally use it with cohorts of principals or teachers to stimulate dialogue, but it can be used as a formal instrument with individuals -and has, quite often. People like it.

Educators here who undertake your second task normally do so in two ways. First, they test principals' perceptions of the validity and meaning of the teachers as leaders framework, by asking questions that encompass the six "elements" that we define in the TL book. Second, they ask open-ended questions that focus on the workplace, for example:

* How do you see your role as principal in relation to TL?
* How might your school benefit from TL?
* How might you nurture meaningful TL in your school?
* What barriers might you expect to confront? How would you respond to these?
* What is your big picture explanation for how TL enhances school succcess? (A tough one).

A combination of these two methodologies would definitely prove very fruitful - I have seen it happen often enough.

Very best wishes. I hope that my suggestions are helpful.

Frank

_____
From: Janet May [JMMay@wyasd.k12.pa.us]
Sent: Wednesday, 24 April 2013 10:55 PM
To: Frank Crowther
Subject: Teacher Leaders

Hello, Dr. Crowther,

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Janet May and I am a high school principal in York, PA, USA. Also, I am currently a doctoral student at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA.   In working on my dissertation proposal, I have looked intensely at the research on teacher leadership. I am a strong believer that principals cannot and should not try to be the only leaders in a school. Teachers have a wealth of knowledge and so many strengths. As a principal, I believe it is my job to cultivate the leadership potential and capability of each of my teachers.

That being said, you can probably understand why I am so drawn to your work! My plan for my dissertation is to focus on the cultivation of teacher leadership. I'd like to begin by surveying teachers using your "Self-Survey of Preliminary Leadership Perceptions." From there, I'm planning to interview teachers to determine what they believe in order to move them into more leadership roles.

My questions for you are twofold. First, since your survey is published in a section of your book that is used as a blueprint for moving teachers into a leadership role, may I assume that I may use this survey for gathering data for my dissertation? The specific text I am referring to is Developing Teacher Leaders: How Teacher Leadership Enhances School Success (Second Edition). Second, I would also like to survey or interview principals on their thoughts regarding teacher leadership and I was wondering if you have any questions you have used with principals that you believe would be beneficial. The principal's perceptions on capacity building are crucial to the success of cultivating teacher leaders.

Thank you very much for your time and attention. I appreciate an insight you can give me.

Janet M. May, Principal
West York Area High School
1800 Bannister St.
York, PA 17404

APPENDIX D

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN A PUBLIC

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Teacher Name _____   **Date** _____

School _____   **Interviewer** _____

1. What does the term "teacher leader" mean to you? Give examples of roles teacher leaders have fulfilled or actions teacher leaders have displayed.

2. In reflecting on those you consider to be "teacher leaders", what characteristics do those individuals display?

3. What opportunities do teachers have to participate in leadership roles at this school?

4. What leadership roles do you play at school?

5. Why do you play those roles?

6. Are there other leadership roles you would like to take on?

7. What would encourage you in the direction of taking on more/other leadership roles? Conversely, is something stopping you from taking on more/other leadership roles?

8. How might your school benefit from having teachers in various leadership roles?

9. In thinking of yourself or other teachers who have taken on leadership roles, what benefits have resulted for the school? The teachers? The students? Others?

10. Do you feel there is mutual trust between you and the principal? A sense of shared purpose? Do teachers freely express themselves in this school? Explain/give examples.

11. As you reflect on teacher leadership, are there any additional comments you would like to add?

APPENDIX E

PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN A PUBLIC

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Principal Name _____   **Date** _____

School _____   **Interviewer** _____

1. What does the term "teacher leader" mean to you? Give examples of roles teacher leaders have fulfilled or actions teacher leaders have displayed.

2. In reflecting on those you consider to be "teacher leaders", what characteristics do those individuals display?

3. What opportunities do teachers have to participate in leadership roles at this school?

4. What other leadership roles would you like teachers to play? Why did you select those roles?

5. What might encourage teachers in the direction of taking on more/other leadership roles? Conversely, is something you see that stops teachers from taking on more/other leadership roles?

6. How do you see your role as principal in relation to teacher leadership?

7. How might you nurture/cultivate meaningful teacher leadership in your school?

8. What barriers might you expect to confront regarding teachers in leadership roles? How would you respond to these barriers?

9. What is your big picture explanation for how teacher leadership enhances school success?

10. Do you feel there is mutual trust between teachers and the principal? A sense of shared purpose? Do teachers freely express themselves in this school? Explain/give examples.

11. As you reflect on teacher leadership, are there any additional comments you would like to add?