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How to Retain Effective Teachers
Through Teacher Leadership

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Opportunities for Teachers,
Results for Urban Students

The Issue

Studies on teacher retention and attrition have suggested that more than 40 percent of all teachers leave the profession within their first five years, and that high-poverty, high-minority public schools have even higher rates of turnover.¹

Even more startling are the results of a TNTP study indicating that half of those who leave are among the most effective teachers. TNTP's report, *the Irreplaceables*, suggests that half of all teachers in the top 20 percent of effectiveness - referred to as "irreplaceables" because they are so valuable that they are nearly impossible to replace - leave within five years.² Clearly, we're not on the right track for retention.

Not only are we letting top teaching talent slip away, we are literally paying the price for losing them. Estimates for the annual national cost of teacher turnover run as high as \$7.3 billion.³ But more importantly, failure to retain effective teachers is costing students. The difference that effective teachers can make for students is enormous. According to a recent study, students with highly effective teachers are significantly more likely to make more money over their careers, attend college, save for retirement, live in better neighborhoods, and not become pregnant as teens.⁴ The impact of having an effective teacher throughout elementary school can significantly close the opportunity gap between low-income students and their more affluent peers.⁵

One reason for this high attrition rate is the dearth of opportunities for teachers to grow and lead. The makeup of the teaching force today is vastly different from just 10 years ago, and is shifting quickly. Teachers with 10 or fewer years of experience now make up 45 percent of the overall teaching force.⁶ Research on the attitudes of these teachers indicates that they want to grow as teachers and leaders and serve in different capacities as educators over their career, but by and large, these needs aren't met by the education system.⁷

In 1986, the Carnegie Forum on Teaching and the Economy called for the creation of lead teacher roles and career advancement opportunities in their landmark report *A Nation Prepared*.⁸ Almost 30 years later, we have yet to realize that vision. However, as the early career teachers flood into the teaching force, teacher leadership is more important than ever.⁹ Teacher leadership positions are increasingly targeted towards the most effective teachers.

As teachers leading in their profession, they are more likely to be recognized by their peers and share their own practices with others, in return having a positive influence on student achievement.¹⁰

Over time, other professions have evolved towards specialization, creating opportunities for professionals to exercise and share their strengths. In too many places, teachers' career options are still restricted to either classroom teaching or moving into administration, requiring them to leave the classroom entirely. Many schools, districts, and public charter school networks around the country have begun the important work of redesigning human capital systems to identify which teachers are highly effective. However, attention is still needed for the next crucial step: how to support and develop these great teachers to keep them in the classroom.

Without specific strategies aimed at retaining these teachers, we may not change the current status quo, the exodus of top teaching talent. The good news is that our retention problem is fixable. Research into how to motivate and retain early career teachers indicates that they want leadership roles and dedicated time for teacher leadership.¹¹ While some teachers are inherently committed to lifetime careers in teaching, for those on the fence, opportunities for leadership can make the difference.¹²

Looking towards the future, teacher leadership must demonstrate true influence — it must matter more than other strategies working to improve schools. To define it and ultimately to allow for metrics of its success, Teach Plus CEO Celine Coggins outlined measurable goals in a 2014 paper, *Five Goals for Teacher Leadership*. Teacher leadership must: 1) Improve student outcomes; 2) Improve the access of high-need students to effective teachers; 3) Extend the careers of teachers looking for growth opportunities; 4) Expand the influence of effective teachers on their peers; and 5) Ensure a role for teachers as leaders in policy decisions affecting their practice.¹³ Across the board, new teacher leadership programs should engage teachers in an enhanced role, as change makers at the school and system levels.

With this understanding, teacher leadership can become more than just a nice idea — it can be an irreplaceable part of school improvement and a key tool for building a high-performing, sustainable teaching force for the future.¹⁴

New Initiative To Retain Teachers

What are some of the new roles that are currently engaging teachers' unique strengths? Among them are leadership in professional development or serving as policy advisors. Designing and implementing opportunities for teachers to lead from the classroom is absolutely feasible — the districts, organizations, and charter management organizations (CMOs) profiled in this paper demonstrate that. However, these places where meaningful leadership opportunities exist are still scattered pockets of innovation, rather than the norm. Schools, districts and CMOs should be thinking creatively about how to capitalize on the abilities of their best teachers and create leadership positions for teachers. This would allow them to contribute to their profession and student learning with a larger, sustained impact. This paper highlights three strategies for retaining the best teachers for a lifelong career in the classroom.

Recommendations

- 1) **Create career ladders with opportunities for leadership and specialization.**
Highly-effective teachers are ambitious, and they want opportunities to expand their leadership and grow throughout their careers. Schools, districts, and CMOs can create opportunities for teachers to play a more active role in planning and decision-making, and capitalize on teachers' individual strengths. These opportunities can be instructional, such as leading professional development or serving as a teacher coach, or policy-oriented, such as being involved in a task force or advisory group. Providing such opportunities recognizes teachers for the specialized professionals they are and values their individual contributions. These opportunities can stand alone or be organized into a career lattice or ladder for coherence.
- 2) **Partner with organizations to grow teacher leadership.**
Where home-grown leadership opportunities are not available, schools, districts, and CMOs should develop partnerships with organizations that provide teacher leadership opportunities, or support their teachers in pursuing opportunities.
- 3) **Restructure staffing and scheduling.**
Teaching is an incredibly demanding job, and while many teachers want to expand their impact beyond their classroom, they often don't have the time to take on additional responsibility. Schools, districts and CMOs can structure their staffing and scheduling to provide this time for teachers. Innovative approaches, such as implementing job sharing options or hybrid roles, allow teachers to grow professionally while maintaining a sustainable work-life balance.

Leadership Roles for Teachers

Internal opportunities for Leadership & Specialization

- Distinguished Teacher Roles
- PD Leaders
- Area Specialists

- Career Lattices & Ladders
- Advisory Teachers
- Teacher Ambassadors

- Summer Roles
- Teacher-Led Schools

Opportunities Through Outside Organizations

- Involving Teachers in Developing the Profession
- Teacher Leadership in School Success

- Online Sharing of Expertise
- Policy Fellowships
- Union Leadership

Restructuring Staffing and Scheduling for Improved Retention

- Differentiated Teaching Responsibilities
- Restructuring How Personnel are Used

- Hiring mentors and tutors

What school systems are doing to promote & retain teachers

Recommendation 1:.....

Create leadership opportunities and career pathways.

Expanded teacher leadership in instruction benefits teachers, schools, and students. The following are examples of particular leadership roles and opportunities for teachers to specialize that schools, districts, and CMOs have created.

Distinguished Teacher Roles

Introducing specialized roles for exceptional teachers is a high-leverage way to involve teachers in coaching and mentoring new or struggling teachers, and to recognize and highlight effective teachers’ abilities as educators.

- **Coach** Uncommon Schools, a national public charter network, leverages its highly-effective teachers to serve as instructional leaders. In middle schools, three to four teachers carry a reduced teaching load in order to observe and provide feedback to a group of peer teachers — both novice and experienced — at least once a week. Feedback is highly personalized, and focuses on the most important bite-sized actions that a teacher can implement to improve his or her instruction. Through these ongoing feedback cycles, Uncommon School’s teachers see rapid professional growth. [Learn more.](#)

- **Peer Assistance and Review** PAR Consulting Teacher (multiple cities): In a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program, expert teachers serve as “consulting teachers” (CTs) that mentor and evaluate their colleagues. These highly respected CTs are selected and trained by the PAR Panel, which is made up of teacher representatives and district administrators. The mentoring component of PAR provides CTs with further professional development as leaders and unique coaching opportunities. Holding leadership positions in evaluating and recommending a course of action for their peers empowers CTs to further the professionalization of teaching. [Learn more.](#)

Professional Development Leaders

- **National Board** National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in Miami-Dade: National Board certification is an advanced teaching credential that teachers can earn by submitting a portfolio of their teaching practice and passing assessments of content knowledge. Many districts encourage teachers to become National Board certified, often paying the application fee. Professional organizations of NBCTs exist around the country, and districts can work with teacher members to share their expertise with their

peers. For example, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools ran a program from 2007-2012 that assigned NBCTs to provide professional development in the district's 36 lowest-performing schools with a Teacher Incentive Fund grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Today, the district pays new NBCTs a one-time stipend of \$7,500 and seeks out NBCTs for leadership roles such as serving as adjunct professors for professional development. [Learn more.](#)

Area Specialists and Coordinators

- **Data Fellows** Green Dot Public Schools' Animo Data Fellows program trains teachers to be data experts at their school. In addition to working together as a group to develop new data projects and systems, each Data Fellow leads professional development at his/her school on analyzing and using data to improve instruction and designs his/her own technology project. Fellows receive a stipend.
- **Arts Coordinators** Arts Coordinators, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD): In recent years, spurred by large budget cuts, many school districts have dramatically reduced their music, drama, and arts programs. To ensure equal access to arts across the district, SFUSD created the position of Arts Coordinator at each school site to work with the principal to implement the elements of the district's Arts Education Master Plan. Arts Coordinators are full-time teachers who receive stipends for their additional responsibilities. They are the primary liaisons to program coordinators and implementation managers at the district level. SFUSD has partnerships with many area arts organizations, as well as itinerant staff that visit schools to provide instruction, and Arts Coordinators manage these activities and serve on the school site Arts Resource Team.

The following are examples of structures like career pathways or ladders that schools, districts, and CMOs have created to provide coherent models for leadership opportunities throughout teachers' careers.

Career Lattices and Ladders

- **Instructional Teacher Leader** Pittsburgh Public Schools created the role of Instructional Teacher Leader 2 (ITL2) at both the K-8 and secondary level. ITL2s teach three or four periods per day, support their colleagues to improve their teaching practice through observation, feedback and support, and professional development based on the needs of teachers at their school. The ITL2 role is one of several teacher leadership opportunities created by Pittsburgh Public Schools. [Learn more.](#)
- **Career Pathways** Baltimore City Schools: Baltimore City teachers and administrators worked together to develop a career pathway model. The new model replaces the standardized pay scale, and teachers move up the ladder by earning "achievement units," or AUs, for demonstrating success on performance evaluations and participating in professional development. Teachers can move one interval up the ladder for every 12 AUs they earn. There are four pathways available to teachers – standard, professional, model, and lead – and all come with designated leadership responsibilities and a

corresponding salary increase. Once teachers are on the Professional interval, they can serve in school-based leadership roles. At the Model teacher level, a teacher can mentor and coach colleagues, help develop and deliver professional development in his/her school or at the district level, supervise student teachers, and more. The Lead pathway is reserved for one teacher in each school. A Lead teacher is the academic leader in a school, and works directly with the principal to improve academics. At this level, teachers can earn more than \$100,000. [Learn more.](#)

- **Master Teachers** Brooke Charter Schools (Boston, MA): Having a clear career pathway for teachers is central to Brooke’s teacher-focused philosophy. At Brooke, there are three categories of teachers: Associate teachers, who have less than two years of experience when hired; Classroom teachers with 2+ years of experience; and Master teachers, who have been rated exceptionally effective for three years in a row. The Master teacher role allows teachers to remain in their classroom and lead by running data meetings, planning professional development, and mentoring Associate teachers. [Learn more.](#)

Advisory Teachers

- **Teacher Leader Cabinet** The Lawrence Public Schools (Lawrence, MA) Teacher Leader Cabinet was established to bring educators together from across the district to advise the superintendent and central office staff on key initiatives in the Lawrence Public School district. In doing so, members play an important role in advocating for their individual schools and the district’s priorities. Additionally, Cabinet members take on a school-based leadership project targeted to meet a critical school need in their building. Together, they propose and execute a year-long model to best serve their school. Any educator in Lawrence Public Schools is eligible to apply for the Teacher Leader Cabinet. [Learn more.](#)
- **Chancellor’s Cabinet** Chancellor’s Cabinet in District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS): The 20 teachers who serve in the Chancellor’s Cabinet in DCPS each year meet with the Chancellor on a monthly basis. During these sessions, teachers provide input to the district on major policy proposals and decisions, bring the perspective from the classroom to these discussions, and share their own concerns and those of their peers with the Chancellor. Cabinet members are selected through an application process. [Learn more.](#)
- **Boston Public Schools/Boston Teachers Union Leadership Roles** Jointly appointed by the President of the Boston Teachers Union and the Boston Public School Office of Educator Effectiveness, the Professional Learning Advisory Board (PLAB) works to improve the learning and well-being of Boston students. As a working group of Boston Public Schools educators, they are dedicated to the advancement and improvement of professional learning in the district. Being a part of the advisory board provides teachers the opportunity to participate in discussions and give input on district initiatives. [Learn more.](#)

The Lead Teacher Program in Boston Public Schools, which is a part of the collective bargaining agreement, recruits Lead Teachers to provide targeted support and professional development to colleagues in their schools around the use of the

educator evaluation system and the inquiry process to set and monitor progress toward goals. [Learn more.](#)

Teacher Ambassadors

- **Teacher Effectiveness Initiative** Memphis City Schools: When Memphis overhauled its teacher hiring, evaluation, and support systems to create the Teacher Effectiveness Initiative (TEI), it convened teachers from each school in the district to create a cadre of informed advocates for TEI and other policy initiatives between schools and the district. Ambassadors were nominated by their principals, and played a key role in advising the district on the implementation of TEI. Ambassadors received stipends and training in education policy, leadership skills, and best communication practices..

Summer Opportunities

- **Central to Leadership** Teachers Central to Leadership Fellowships, District of Columbia Public School (DCPS): During this selective five-week summer fellowship, DCPS teachers are placed on teams in the central office and work on issues ranging from curriculum development to teacher recruitment and selection. The fellowship affords them the opportunity to contribute substantially to DCPS initiatives and work with DCPS leadership on a regular basis. In addition to intensive professional development and mentorship, Fellows receive stipends of \$5,000. [Learn more.](#)

Teacher-Led Schools

- **Oliver Partnership School** The Oliver Partnership School (Lawrence, MA) faced a state takeover in 2011, plagued by uncertainty and political unrest. Teachers from the school believed they could design and implement a new school that would allow teachers to have a voice in decisions that affect their practice. With this mindset, teachers approached the Lawrence Teachers' Union with their idea for a teacher-led school, and in August of 2013 the new Oliver Partnership School opened its doors. With support from a variety of partners, including Unlocking Potential, there is no principal, and two teachers serve as "co-leaders." Elected by their peers, a team of educators make decisions on curriculum, instruction, and assessments. In its first year, initial data from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's 2014 Report Card show that student achievement improved — and AFT President Randi Weingarten visited the school to highlight its success. [Learn more.](#)
- **Mathematics and Science Leadership Academy** The Mathematics and Science Leadership Academy is one of at least 70 teacher-led public schools in the country according to the *Washington Post*. As part of the Denver Public School system, at the Leadership Academy everyone is a "learner, teacher, and leader." With this motto, the Academy is entirely teacher-led, with two lead teachers sharing many of the responsibilities of a traditional principal. Together, teachers collaborate with staff, students, and parents to determine the direction of the school. They have autonomy over selecting leaders, and setting the schedule and budget. Opportunities for coaching and peer evaluation are also set in place. In May of 2014, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan visited the Academy to see these hybrid roles in action. The Academy has been recognized for its strong attendance rate of 95 percent and its exemplary work with English Language Learners. [Learn more.](#)

Recommendation 2:

Partner with Organizations to Grow Teacher Leadership

Involving Teachers in Developing the Profession

- Core Collaborative Initiative** The Core Collaborative (C2) Initiative, designed by Teach Plus Teaching Policy Fellows, is a set of teacher-led university courses led by current classroom teachers with expertise in the Common Core. C2 Teacher Leaders lead courses in Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., and Memphis, TN, to facilitate teacher learning on Common Core instructional strategies in subjects such as close reading, Common Core math shifts, literacy in science and social studies classrooms, and more. The C2 Initiative provides leadership roles for highly effective teachers and gives educators the opportunity to learn best practices from the experts they trust most — fellow teachers. [Learn more.](#)
- School District Partnership** Long Beach School District Partnership for Teacher Preparation: In the 1990s, California State University Long Beach and Long Beach Unified School District formed the Seamless Educational Partnership with the goal of increasing the number of students graduating from high school ready for college. One of the elements of this partnership was reforming teacher preparation to better prepare new teachers for working in diverse, urban classrooms. Selected Long Beach K-12 teachers work in hybrid roles, splitting their time between teaching in their school and serving as faculty for teacher candidates' methods courses at the University, and reciprocally, teacher candidates from the University student teach in the district a structured field experience program in Long Beach schools. Because of improved teacher preparation and leadership roles, the district has reduced teacher turnover to 7% (as compared with 20% nationwide). [Learn more.](#)
- National Academy of Advanced Teacher Education (NAATE)** Geared toward experienced teachers already identified as high-performers, the National Academy of Advanced Teacher Education is a unique teacher development program. In an effort to link these outstanding teachers' daily practice to key theories, frameworks, and principles of the teaching profession, teachers participate in an intensive residential program of study that spans 350 hours over several seasons. The program is two-fold; teachers are given tools to help deepen their classroom practice and learn how to best leverage their leadership skills with colleagues and other educators outside the classroom. [Learn more.](#)

Teacher Leadership in School Success

- T3 Initiative** T3 Initiative in Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., and Indianapolis: Teach Plus' T3 (Turnaround Teacher Teams) Initiative places cohorts of highly effective teachers in low-performing schools. T3 teachers comprise 25% of a school's staff, and lead teams of teachers at their schools. They are trained and supported for their leadership positions by a T3 Coach in each school. The T3 Initiative provides a way

for teachers to lead a school through the challenging turnaround process while still teaching in the classroom. T3 teachers are compensated for their additional time spent in training and fulfilling leadership responsibilities. [Learn more.](#)

- **TAP** TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement operates in over a hundred districts across more than 10 states. TAP schools implement multiple career pathways that allow teachers to grow in their career and pursue leadership positions without leaving the classroom. Steps on the career pathway are also tied to compensation increases. Master teachers conduct teacher evaluations with the principal, and also lead professional learning communities (PLCs), provide demonstration lessons, field test student strategies in classrooms, team teach with career teachers, and coach teachers. Mentor teachers assist in leading PLC meetings; observe, coach, and provide feedback to career teachers; and work with each other and career teachers to plan for instruction. TAP weekly cluster groups are more structured than traditional PLCs in that they are led by trained master teachers who are held responsible for delivering field tested strategies with proven results to the group each week, and are charged with following up to ensure that group members are successful in implementing strategies in their classrooms the following week. Both master and mentor teachers serve on their school's TAP Leadership Team. They work with the principal to analyze student data and to design and implement a school-wide academic plan. Research shows that retention of effective teachers at TAP schools improves, and the percentage of weak teachers that remain after implementation goes down. [Learn more.](#)

- **Leading Educators Fellowship** The goal of the national Leading Educators Fellowship is to decrease teacher attrition in high-needs schools by driving achievement and a positive school culture. Teacher-leaders receive formal training, support and intelligence of a peer cohort, and their own personal coach. This rigorous two-year experience focuses on four vital areas: Core Beliefs and Mindsets, Management of Self and Others, Cultural Leadership, and Instructional Leadership. As teams of highly skilled teacher-leaders, Fellows can contribute to robust systems for impact at scale. [Learn more.](#)

Online Sharing of Expertise

- **LearnZillion** LearnZillion was started by a former principal at E. L. Haynes Public Charter School in Washington, D.C. who wanted to use video to share best practices across classrooms. Teachers who excel in delivering instruction on specific concepts can apply to be on LearnZillion's Dream Team, which produces online video lessons. Each short, free video features an expert educator delivering a lesson that is aligned to a particular Common Core standard, and the videos are available on LearnZillion's website for other teachers to use. [Learn more.](#)
- **BetterLesson's Master Teacher Project** To prepare and support effective teachers at scale, the lesson-sharing website BetterLesson partnered with the National Education Association (NEA) to create the Master Teacher Project in the summer of 2014. Through BetterLesson's Master Teacher Project, master teachers create and share a year-long Common Core aligned course on BetterLesson. To supplement these lesson plans, Master Teachers share

their own reflections and insights into what worked, what didn't, and tricks to successfully implement each lesson. Master Teachers have, on average, 12 years of experience in the classroom and come from every geographic region in the country. [Learn more.](#)

Policy Fellowships

- **Teach Plus Policy Fellowship** Teach Plus Policy Fellows (Massachusetts, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Indianapolis, and Memphis): The Teach Plus Policy Fellows program is a selective cohort program for teacher leaders in the “second stage” of their careers (typically, years 3-10) who are interested in expanding their impact beyond the classroom and achieving systems-level change. Over the course of 16 months, Policy Fellows in their respective cities meet monthly to learn about education policy and research, engage with decision makers such as education officials and superintendents, and advocate for better policies for children and teachers. All Policy Fellows are current full-time teachers and receive stipends for their involvement. [Learn more.](#)
- **Teaching Ambassador Fellowship** The US Department of Education (ED) offers teachers leadership opportunities through the Teaching Ambassador Fellowship Program, in addition to a sister program for principals, the Principal Ambassador Fellowship. The purpose of the paid Fellowships is to build a community of teacher leaders across the country that engage in the national conversation about education policy; expand teachers’ leadership roles at the local, state, and national levels; and to help to boost teachers’ voice in crafting education policy. There are two types of Fellowships: the full-time Washington Fellowship based at the Department’s Headquarters in Washington D.C., and the Classroom Fellowship in which selected teachers stay in their classroom while working part-time for ED. Both Fellowships are designed for participants to gain deep knowledge about federal programs and policies to provide outreach to other teachers to share information about these policies and programs and; to provide input on these policies and programs based on their own expertise and what they learn about from other teachers. Thus a major role of Fellows is to facilitate conversation amongst educators at the district, state, and regional levels, and present information about schools and their own experiences to the community. These selective programs are open to outstanding teachers with five or more years of direct instructional experience, strong leadership records, great communication skills, and background experiences with activities that lend themselves to the role. [Learn more.](#)
- **Hope Street Group Fellows** Hope Street Group’s education work includes a national and state teacher fellows program. National Teacher Fellows are classroom teachers and instructional coaches who, as peer leaders, want to contribute their ideas and expertise in helping shape education policy. Teacher Fellows work for one year, receiving a stipend for their work and extensive training in leadership, current education policy issues, relationship building, writing, and presenting. They interact online and in-person with other teachers, lawmakers, administrators, and education groups from across the country to share ideas and experiences with reform and advocate for education policy changes, focusing on teacher effectiveness. The State Teacher Fellowship is focused in a particular state. Teachers similarly work for one year receiving a stipend, training, and support. State Teacher Fellows are leaders, working to

engage other teachers in discussions in order to propose teacher-led solutions to challenging education policies. These recommendations are then used by state leaders to make timely decisions. The State Teacher Fellows program is currently in Hawaii, Kentucky, and Tennessee. [Learn more.](#)

• **Teachers United Policy Teams** Each year, teachers in the Teachers United network in Washington State come together to democratically select three policy issues. Teachers select teacher leaders and assemble a team of teacher advocates on each issue. The teams design an advocacy strategy around their recommendations, and engage fellow teachers in the effort. Teachers United teachers have played significant roles in changing teacher evaluation legislation at the state level, adopting high quality Pre-K in Seattle, and drafting a piece of legislation on professional development for the 2015 legislative session. [Learn more.](#)

• **America Achieves Fellowship** America Achieves Fellowship for Teachers and Principals (AAFTP): Becoming a Teacher or Principal Fellow with America Achieves gives highly effective educators the opportunity to advise policymakers and education leaders on best practices and inform them about practical tools, policies, and practices that could help teachers across the country. Fellows receive professional development in a number of areas, including communicating with and through the media; the history and process for policymaking and the politics of education policy; and current research on the achievement gap and strategies for closing it. America Achieves Fellows also receive a stipend. [Learn more.](#)

• **Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ)** In 2003, the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ) launched the nation’s first virtual network to support teachers in spreading their policy and pedagogical expertise. For the past four years, CTQ has partnered with school districts to create teacherpreneur positions. These hybrid roles divide teachers’ workweeks between teaching and leading efforts to transform schools and the profession. CTQ “buys out” half of teacherpreneurs’ contracts, working alongside them to craft unique hybrid roles that include activities such as advising policymakers on education issues; mobilizing peers across the state, country, or globe to design systems-level solutions; facilitating professional learning experiences; launching social media campaigns; developing partnerships; and writing for national publications. Throughout the school year, CTQ supports members of each teacherpreneur cohort to cultivate their leadership skills; deepen their knowledge of education policy, research, and best practices; and “go public” with their ideas. Increasing numbers of districts and state agencies, having witnessed teacherpreneurs’ impact, are now tackling their own systemic challenges by creating hybrid roles. Many are looking to CTQ for technical support as they pursue a bold brand of teacher leadership for 21st-century teaching and learning. [Learn more.](#)

Union Leadership

• **NEA Fellowship** What can our unions do to ignite the “New Majority” of educators in union work? Teach Plus, in partnership with the National Education Association (NEA), sponsored a year-long fellowship program aimed at addressing this question by equipping

teachers with new knowledge about education policy and the role of unions. In a 2014 report from the NEA Fellows to NEA leaders, *Rock the Union: An Action Plan to Engage Early Career Teachers & Elevate the Profession*, NEA Fellows called attention to the critical need for union membership and engagement of early career educators. The Fellowship granted teachers the opportunity to learn about advocacy by exposing them to pertinent policy debates and allowing them to interact with policymakers. Fellows advised NEA leaders on the future of the profession and union engagement. A second Fellowship will launch in 2015. [Learn more.](#)

- **Councils** Councils on Teaching and Learning, Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA): The MCEA's Councils on Learning and Teaching provide input directly from teachers to district administration and staff about curriculum, instructional, staff development, and assessment matters. There are councils for elementary, middle, and high school teachers, and Council Representatives are elected to their positions by their grade-level or content-area peers. They meet regularly together and with district administrators. Council Representatives are responsible for regularly soliciting feedback from their peers; recruiting teachers for focus groups and other input to the district; reviewing curriculum and staff development plans; developing joint recommendations on policy and initiatives; and helping to roll out new initiatives. MCEA members on the Councils benefit from leadership and problem-solving training and also receive compensation for their service. [Learn more.](#)
- **Asociación de Maestros Unidos** Asociación de Maestros Unidos (AMU), Green Dot Public Schools, Los Angeles: AMU is the union that represents the Green Dot network of public charter schools. AMU has provided teachers with a formal structure for voice and participation in decision-making through collective bargaining and local and district-wide committee structures. The governing body for AMU is comprised of five Executive Board members and two site representatives from each of the Green Dot schools. The President takes a temporary leave from teaching for the term of service, but all other members of the governing body are current teachers who receive stipends for their additional work. Through the governing body and site-based leadership, teachers share decision-making authority with Green Dot administration over school policy, curriculum, the budget, and the calendar. Site representatives are elected by their peers at each school, and the Executive Members are elected by all AMU members. AMU has also helped to negotiate teacher leadership roles at each site. [Learn more.](#)

Recommendation 3:

Adjust Staffing Structure to Meet Teacher Needs

Teachers have different needs and priorities at different points in their career. In order to retain the most effective teachers, school systems should create flexible roles and staffing structures that adjust teaching roles to meet teachers’ interests and responsibilities.

Differentiated Teaching Responsibilities

- Associate Teachers** Associate Teachers: Brooke Charter Schools in Boston, MA hires Associate Teachers with little or no teaching experience and helps them to build their instructional capacity throughout an apprenticeship year. This prepares them to be a classroom teacher of record the next year. Associate Teachers are matched with one or more senior teachers who serve as their mentors, and they provide tutoring, serve as student advisors, help with lesson planning and curriculum preparation, and ultimately lead their own classes and lessons. This allows new teachers to gradually assume teaching responsibilities as they build their skills, while providing more seasoned teachers with the support to maximize their impact as teachers. [Learn more.](#)

Restructuring How Personnel Are Used

- Opportunity Culture Schools** Public Impact established the Opportunity Culture school model to build tailored teacher leadership pathways that expand the reach of effective teachers to more students. This is accomplished by engaging teacher leaders to facilitate collaborative teams that pursue instructional excellence. The Opportunity Culture model also uses job redesign and technology to allow excellent teachers to reach more students. Beginning in 2013-14, the Opportunity Culture model was implemented in four high-needs schools in Charlotte, NC, serving about 7,000 students. In the spring of 2013, the program received over 700 applications to fill just 19 positions. The Opportunity Culture is a model in which committed teachers receive recognition and reward for their hard work and leadership. [Learn more.](#)
- MATCH** MATCH Corps at the MATCH Schools: The MATCH Corps at MATCH Public Schools in Massachusetts are top college graduates participating in a one-year urban education fellowship. They work as tutors and mentors to small groups of students during the day and after school, and also work as classroom Teaching Assistants alongside master MATCH teachers. The MATCH Corps members help free up teachers’ time for teaching, as they take on many of the duties and responsibilities that might otherwise be expected of teachers. Teachers at MATCH Schools are able to focus the majority of their energy on instruction, and because of the innovative MATCH model, are able to serve simultaneously as exemplary teachers for the next generation of MATCH teachers. [Learn more.](#)

- **City Year** Partnering with City Year: City Year is a national non-profit that places teams of young college graduates, or corps members, in schools for 10 months. Corps members work full-time to improve student attendance, behavior, and performance in math and English. They greet students at their buses each day, tutor students one-on-one or in small groups, make phone calls home to parents, assist teachers in the classroom, and lead activities designed to engage students in their community and school. Like the MATCH Corps, corps members take over responsibilities from teachers, freeing up their time to focus on what they do best: teach. [Learn more.](#)

Conclusion

Highly effective teachers want to stay in the profession. They love what they do, and strive to expand their impact at the school, district, state and national levels. Retaining effective teachers requires schools, districts, and CMOs to implement specific strategies aimed at retention. In order to ensure that the most ambitious and effective teachers stay for 10 years and beyond, school systems should create career ladders that allow teachers to gradually earn leadership opportunities that meet their aspirations, provide them the time to serve, and compensate them appropriately. There are many specialized paths that school systems can create for teachers' various interests and strengths. Highly effective teachers are school systems' best tools for helping students succeed. School systems should provide leadership opportunities that allow them to expand their reach and serve the students who need them most.

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End Notes

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