



## Teacher Leadership as a Retention Strategy

**Teachers are more likely to remain in schools where they have opportunities to grow.** Teachers are too often isolated, working in silos without the tools or opportunities to collaborate to address problems of practice. Distributed leadership models give teachers the support and skills to tackle problems they face, addressing core motivating factors like autonomy, mastery, and purpose that make them feel empowered and connected.

## Teacher Leadership as a School Improvement Strategy

**When teachers are empowered to lead, schools can do more.** Because of the demanding nature of their roles, principals often do not have the time or bandwidth to solve every issue in their building. Distributed leadership models allow schools to respond flexibly to challenges and better meet the needs of their students and teachers.

## The Change Agent Program

**Teach Plus supports teachers leading efforts to address problems of practice in schools.** The principal and teacher leader partner to identify an issue in their school that aligns to the school's strategic plan and impacts teacher practice and student outcomes. Then, Teach Plus provides training and ongoing coaching to teachers who demonstrate effectiveness in their classroom and the potential to lead other teachers effectively in order to maximize their impact, achieve measurable results, and grow their capacity for leadership:

- + **Root Cause Analysis:** Teacher leaders explore root causes of the issue to ensure the change effort they lead will make a difference for students, and then craft SMART goals to address them.
- + **Leadership Training:** At a summer leadership institute and ongoing monthly sessions, teacher leaders learn principles of change management, develop action plans, and grow skills to better lead their teams.
- + **Ongoing Coaching:** Teach Plus provides regular 1:1 coaching sessions and progress monitoring to support teacher leaders as they implement plans, address challenges, and are accountable for results.
- + **Stipend:** In recognition of their time and effort, teacher leaders receive a stipend from Teach Plus at the successful conclusion of the program.

## Change Agent Results

**Over the past five years, Change Agents have impacted student outcomes from Chicago to rural Illinois:**

- + 87% of Change Agents met or exceeded goals for shifting teacher practices or student outcomes;
- + 88% of Change Agents had at least one level of growth on the Teacher Leadership Attribute Continuum;
- + 100% of Change Agents agreed that participating has developed their capacity as a leader;
- + 100% of administrators "would recommend Teach Plus as a partner."



## Example Change Agent Project Links

**Taylorville, IL - Molly Lively:** Molly led her team to investigate and address the root causes of chronic attendance issues, partnering with the community and reducing the absentee rate from 18% to 4% in her rural K-2 school.

**Chicago, IL - Sabrina Williams:** Sabrina worked with her department to embed Culturally Responsive Teaching principles in instruction, increasing the number of students feeling connected to school from 50% to nearly 70%.

**Jacksonville, IL - Jennifer Stendback:** Jennifer empowered teachers across her district to deliver small group interventions, resulting in 80% of students meeting EOY reading and math goals by the MOY assessment.

**Chicago, IL - Neida Martinez:** Neida implemented monthly data cycles and peer observations with her team, leading to 80% of classrooms meeting or exceeding growth goals. Her work expanded schoolwide the next year.

## Cost and Commitment

**Distributed leadership is most effective when project goals align with strategic plans.** The most successful Change Agents work closely with principals to ensure the work is meaningful and properly supported. While Teach Plus provides full direct support of teacher leaders, school leaders can expect the following commitments:

- + **Candidate Selection:** Principals help select teachers with a track record of classroom excellence, the potential for leadership, and project goals that align with school strategic plans.
- + **Project Goal-Setting:** Principals engage with their teacher leaders to help determine an issue, explore root causes, and develop change goals. Typically this consists of a 1-hour summer meeting with the teacher leader and a Teach Plus coach, and attendance at one half day of our kickoff training.
- + **Ongoing Check-ins:** School leaders should plan to check in formally once each quarter with teacher leaders and Teach Plus coaches to monitor progress, address barriers to success, and stay informed, as well as check in regularly with teacher leaders outside these formal checkpoints.
- + **School-Level Support:** Teacher leaders need time, opportunity, and occasionally additional resources called for by a specific project. Principals ensure teams have protected time to meet and carry out the work of the change effort, and that other programs or projects don't conflict with the work.
- + **Program Funding:** The cost to support a Change Agent and their leadership project for one school year is \$12,500, which can be funded through the new ISBE Teacher Shortage grants, Title I or Title II funds, IL-Empower grants, and local dollars.

## Where We've Worked:

- Alton CUSD 111
- Berkeley SD 87
- Bethalto CUSD 8
- Bunker Hill CUSD 8
- Chicago Public Schools
- Collinsville CUSD 10
- Jacksonville SD 117
- Maywood-Melrose Park-Broadview SD 89
- Taylorville CUSD 3
- Triad CUSD 2

