2

What Is Teacher Leadership?

The term teacher leadership refers to that set of skills demonstrated by teachers who continue to teach students but also have an influence that extends beyond their own classrooms to others within their own school and elsewhere. It entails mobilizing and energizing others with the goal of improving the school's performance of its critical responsibilities related to teaching and learning. Mobilizing and energizing does not occur because of the role of the leader as boss (as might be the case with a principal), but rather because the individual is informed and persuasive. Therefore, an important characteristic of a teacher leader is expertise and skill in engaging others in complex work. It also entails an unwavering passion for the core mission of the school and the courage to confront obstacles to achieving that mission.

Because improvement of a school's performance frequently involves doing things differently from how they have been done in the past, teacher leadership often requires managing a process of change. But this is not always the case. Many times, improvement occurs when teacher leaders motivate colleagues to become more skilled and thoughtful regarding their work, encouraging them not to do things differently but to do them *better*. At other times, of course, teacher leaders recognize an opportunity to institute a practice that will improve the school's program. In those situations, teacher leadership does require convincing others to use a new approach, but the change

process involved is not that of implementing a new program, in which the stages of concern have been well documented (Loucks-Horsley, 1996). Rather, it is a professional exploration of practice.

The popular conception of leadership, whether in the business world, the military, or an educational setting, is that of a lone ranger, a strong individual who works against long odds to accomplish challenging feats. That is not the appropriate image for teacher leaders. Rather, teacher leaders develop a collaborative relationship with colleagues; they inspire others to join them on a journey without a specific destination. They recognize an opportunity or a problem, and they convince others to join them in addressing it. Michael Fullan (2001) put it so well: "The litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilises people's commitment to putting their energy into actions designed to improve things. It is individual commitment, but above all it is collective mobilisation" (p. 9).

Background to the Concept of Teacher Leadership

Many aspects of teaching distinguish it from other professions, including its relatively low pay and low status, its lack of an apprenticeship period for novices, its oversight by government agencies, and its relatively high degree of union membership. Furthermore, until recently, teaching was one of the few fields (along with nursing) open to educated women. That fact, combined with the bureaucratic nature of schools and the pattern of mostly male administrators supervising mostly female teachers, has reinforced the public perception of teaching as relatively low-skilled work with generous vacations. In fact, in many states and school districts, the work of teaching is regarded as following procedures or instructional plans designed by others and under the close direction of a supervisor. While there are historical reasons for these conditions, it should be noted that they do not prevail in many other countries, where teachers are highly respected and work with a great deal of autonomy. In the United States, however, such characteristics define teaching as semiskilled work in which teachers, at the lowest level of the bureaucratic hierarchy, take direction from their superiors. In recognition of this situation, the educational literature is replete with pleas for teaching to become a true profession.

To be sure, teaching is unique among the professions in the degree of government regulation involved. The state has a vital interest in an educated citizenry; education is a critical factor when it comes to casting a vote and serving on a jury, and an educated workforce is essential to sustained economic development. Furthermore, in most

places, students have little choice in the schools they attend or in the teachers in those schools to whom they are assigned. These factors ensure that educators in general, and teachers in particular, are subject to greater state regulation than, say, accountants or architects.

Embedded in the bureaucratic conceptualization of teaching is the fact that teaching is, in most settings, a "flat" profession; the first day on the job for the teacher with 10 years' experience is the same as the first day for a novice just entering the profession. That is, both are the teacher of record, with responsibility for the students in their charge. No architectural firm would ask a newly licensed architect to single-handedly design a major building the first week on the job. Rather, she would work on a team with more experienced architects. Similarly, a newly licensed accountant would not be assigned a major client to handle on his own. At the very least, he would be mentored by an experienced colleague and would gradually assume greater autonomy for the firm's clients.

Clearly, the work of an experienced teacher is not the same as that of a novice. Experience confers many benefits to both educators and their students—familiarity with the curriculum, an understanding of youth, a repertoire of instructional strategies, and deep knowledge of the workings of the school and the district. In other words, experience is frequently (although, it must be admitted, not always) accompanied by expertise. Such expertise results in professional restlessness in some individuals.

Professional restlessness leads to what some teachers have described as a leadership itch: the desire to reach out beyond their own classrooms. In virtually every school and school district, there are teachers who have become skilled in their work with students so that their daily work is not the challenge it was in their first few years. While the profession of teaching is never fully mastered, and while teachers never fully exhaust the potential of their work with students, these individuals seek additional challenges and opportunities to extend their reach. Some teachers want to influence more students than those whom they teach directly each year. Their vision extends beyond their own classrooms and beyond even their own instructional teams or departments. They recognize the school for the complex system it is and see that students' experience in school is a function of more than their interaction with individual teachers; it is influenced by the *systems* in place in the school.

Traditionally, the only ways in which teachers with an inclination for leadership could satisfy their yearnings for greater reach and influence have been either to become

administrators or to become active in their teachers unions. For some teachers, depending on the situation and their individual personalities, such career paths are effective. As has been well documented, the role of administrators is critical to a successful school. In addition, in some settings, teachers unions offer opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership within the profession. However, both of these approaches can require leaving the classroom (certainly when going into administration and frequently when actively engaging in a union). By contrast, there are teachers who want to exercise greater influence while continuing their work as a teacher; they feel an urge to exercise leadership as teachers rather than administrators.

Teacher leaders see themselves first as *teachers;* although they are not interested in becoming administrators, they are looking to extend their influence. They are professional educators who want to continue to work as teachers rather than as managers. Some of these skilled teachers enter administration only to return to full-time teaching because they miss the daily interaction with students. Teacher leaders are more than teachers, yet different from administrators. Such a concept of teacher leadership reflects an increasingly recognized hole in models of teacher professionalism that has not yet been fully explored in the professional literature.

The concept of teacher leadership also recognizes that teachers' tenure in a school is normally longer than that of the administrators who are nominally in charge (20–30 years for many teachers as compared with the typical 3–5 years for a principal). The school change and leadership literature is replete with examples of schools that have been turned around by an inspired, and inspiring, principal but that have then reverted to their previous state when that individual moved to another position. Therefore, the cultivation of teacher leadership may well be a wise investment for a school district committed to improving practice over the long term. It may also prove decisive in encouraging gifted teachers to remain with education rather than abandon the profession for one that offers greater opportunities for ongoing challenge and advancement.

Furthermore, in most schools, traditional norms of autonomy and individuality work against the development of professional learning communities, which are essential for meaningful school improvement. That is, it is increasingly recognized that if schools are to achieve better results with their students, it must be a collective endeavor rather than a collection of individual efforts. Teacher leadership, when exercised by educators respected by their colleagues, makes a significant contribution to de-privatizing practice —so critical for collective learning.

The concept of teacher leadership did not spring into being in the early years of the 21st century. Rather, it has a long history in various forms, reaching back for more than 100 years. However, while the concept of teacher leadership is not new, it has been featured prominently in the literature of school reform and improvement, particularly in light of its connection to broader school reform efforts. As with much else in U.S. education, the antecedents of our current thinking about teacher leadership rest with John Dewey. An important part of Dewey's advocacy of the democratic society was his insistence on democratic schools. This vision included both students and teachers as partners in the democratic venture. Throughout the 20th century, enlightened school boards and administrators recognized that if teachers were to embrace the school's policies and organizational structures, they had to be part of the processes that created them. Hence, many schools created site councils to make decisions affecting the school; teachers have traditionally played an important role on those bodies. These arrangements were in direct response to the notion, best stated by John Dewey (1903), that it was essential that "every teacher had some regular and representative way to register judgment upon matters of educational importance, with assurance that this judgment would somehow affect the school system" (p. 195). In 1986, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy concluded that teachers should have "more control over their work environments" (p. 103). Thus, the concept of teacher participation in school decision making has a long history, with teachers involved in school governance. However, teacher participation in school governance, as important as it is, hinges on the assumption that the principal responsibility for school governance rests with administrators. That is, teachers, rather than taking initiative for what happens in the school, are invited to participate in making decisions. True teacher leadership, as conceptualized in this book, involves spontaneous and organic teacher initiative and facilitation, ideas absent from earlier work in the field.

Connections to Related Concepts

The concept of teacher leadership rests within a web of concepts regarding leadership in educational and organizational settings and is best understood in relation to these other ideas.

Leadership as Administration

In educational circles, the term school leader means the site administrator; university programs for school leaders prepare principals and superintendents for their roles.

The professional literature in educational leadership focuses almost exclusively on the role of the principal, with excursions into the leadership exercised by central office administrators such as superintendents, assistant superintendents, staff developers, and curriculum directors.

The Interstate School Leaders Licensing Consortium (ISLLC), an outgrowth of the Council of Chief State School Officers, has defined school leadership (taken to mean administrative leadership) as consisting of six standards, all intended to support the principal's essential responsibility as instructional leader. These standards, which have been adopted by many states as criteria for the licensing of administrators, may be summarized as establishing and maintaining a vision; providing instructional leadership (in all its manifestations); managing the building; interacting with the broader community; maintaining high ethical standards; and interacting with the larger political, social, economic, and cultural context. For each of these standards, the document *Standards for School Leaders* (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996) describes knowledge, dispositions, and performances that, taken together, serve to further define each standard. According to this approach, it is not sufficient for school administrators to be good managers; they must be visionary educational leaders who can mobilize and inspire their school communities in the service of high-level student learning. Hence, ISLLC's definition of leadership, while focused on the role of administrators, does not rest solely, or even mainly, on the administrators as managers; they must also be instructional leaders. Nonetheless, they are undeniably administrators.

Administrative leadership is essential to successful schools. Since the effective schools research of the 1970s, strong administrative leadership has been recognized as critical to high levels of student learning (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). More recently, a study of urban school districts has reaffirmed the importance of the principal's role in promoting high levels of achievement (Simmons, 2004). Although it may be a necessary condition for school improvement, administrative leadership is not sufficient; it must be complemented by teacher leadership, that informal, spontaneous exercise of initiative and creativity that results in enhanced student learning. The litmus test of effective leadership (exercised by administrators or teachers) is whether improved learning survives the departure of the leader, whether it has become institutionalized.

Sustainability goes even further. Sustainability, as described by Andy Hargreaves (in press), is the institutionalization not of changed practice but of the *habit* of critically examining practice. Embedding these habits of mind into the daily work of schools

cannot happen without leadership, and it is part of the leadership exercised by administrators. Therefore, the concept of teacher leadership is neither in conflict nor in competition with the idea of administrative leadership. They are complementary concepts that ideally work together on behalf of students and their learning.

Leadership as Management of Change

Some writers, notably Michael Fullan (2001), have conceptualized leadership as the management of change, often large-scale change. Such efforts require leadership skills, to be sure; the history of education is littered with the corpses of innovations that did not survive the departure of a heroic leader. Managing change, therefore, requires not only initiating but also institutionalizing and sustaining changed practice. Furthermore, large-scale change—affecting a school district or indeed an entire state or country—is frequently accompanied by revisions in policy and is typically supported by a large infusion of resources.

But teacher leadership rarely involves large-scale, systemic change. Changed practice that results from teacher leadership is significant and can reach into the very crevices of a school's program. But it is very different from the large-scale implementation of new programs that is typically involved in systemic change. Although the literature on leadership as management of change is important to our understanding of leadership in general, it does not fully explain the concept of teacher leadership as described here.

Formal Teacher Leadership Roles

Many schools have instituted structures in which teachers assume formal leadership roles in the school, such as master teacher, department chair, team leader, helping teacher, or mentor. These arrangements recognize the essential role of teachers as key players in the broader effort toward enhanced student achievement. Such roles are not created to engage teachers primarily in establishing schools as democratic societies. Rather, they are created to distribute the work of running schools to others besides the principal and to enlist teachers as partners in school improvement.

Such role-based positions do represent opportunities for leadership by teachers. And while the term distributed leadership has been used in a number of different senses, it frequently connotes such spreading, or "stretching"—to use Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond's (2001) vivid term—of responsibility among different individuals in the organization. However, to the extent that teachers are placed in roles of influence and

decision making, other teachers may regard them as quasi-administrators. This is particularly the case if teachers must apply for the position and be selected and if the role carries supervisory responsibilities. Even when teachers in formal roles play no part in the evaluation process, some teachers regard those who are "appointed and anointed" to such positions as breaking ranks with the solidarity of teachers, as no longer being true colleagues. In other words, they may be seen as administrators in teachers' clothing. Furthermore, depending on the selection criteria and process used, those appointed to leadership positions may or may not possess real leadership skills; at the worst, the entire endeavor may smack of favoritism, with the credibility of the entire enterprise undermined. Teachers in formal or semiformal roles are more likely to be trusted by other teachers when the members of the instructional team or the department elect their leader and when the roles rotate each year.

A variation on the theme of teacher as quasi-administrator is the concept of "teacher on special assignment." Such an arrangement typically enables a teacher (usually selected by the administrator) to serve as the coordinator for implementing a new program or to assist colleagues with a new approach or strategy. The assignment recognizes that teachers may be the true experts in the field and that they cannot serve as resources to their colleagues while teaching full-time. Teachers who hold these positions, particularly when the positions are temporary—as they generally are—are rarely regarded as pseudo-administrators.

When teachers who serve in formal leadership roles remain teachers in the eyes of their colleagues, the concepts of shared decision making or distributed leadership are still of limited value in understanding teacher leadership. They suggest that someone—typically an administrator—is doing the sharing of decision making or the distributing of leadership. This implies that those decisions and that leadership are the administrator's to share or distribute; in other words, these positions are an extension of administrative leadership.

Teacher leadership, by contrast, is spontaneously exercised by teachers (any teacher) in response to a need or an opportunity through work with colleagues. It emerges organically; no one appoints teacher leaders to their roles. And while administrators may (and usually do) play an important supporting role, the initiative comes from the teacher.

Why Teacher Leadership?

As stated earlier, interest in teacher leadership has increased substantially in recent years. Why is this? Why are educators and policymakers suddenly interested in this phenomenon?

The Managerial Imperative

Educational leadership, as described in the professional literature and typically referring to administrative leadership at the school site, has become a gigantic task, beyond the capacity of any but the most capable and energetic principal. Richard Elmore describes it well:

> Reading the literature on the principalship can be overwhelming, because it suggests that principals should embody all the traits and skills that remedy all the defects of the schools in which they work. They should be in close touch with their communities, inside and outside the school; they should, above all, be masters of human relations, attending to all the conflicts and disagreements that might arise among students, among teachers, and among anyone else who chooses to create a conflict in the school; they should be both respectful of the authority of district administrators and crafty at deflecting administrative intrusions that disrupt the autonomy of teachers; they should keep an orderly school; and so on. Somewhere on the list one usually finds a reference to instruction. (2000, p. 14)

The vast literature (and it is vast) on school leadership has defined the principal variously as requiring some or all of the following forms of leadership: technical, professional, transactional, and transformational. Other models of leadership focus on its political, managerial, or cultural dimensions. When distilled, these concepts all seek to establish the principal as the inspirational head of the complex organization called school. The principal is to shepherd the school toward the achievement of demanding imperatives mandated by national, state, and district policy. The sheer range of the descriptions of what the principal's work encompasses attests to the size and complexity of the role.

Not surprisingly, school administrators are staggering under the load; human resources personnel report that principalships are increasingly difficult to fill. As instructional leaders and as managers, site administrators are burdened with huge responsibilities under increasing pressure from their own districts and government

agencies and with student populations that are increasingly diverse in academic and social preparation and in English language skills. A principal in New York City has reported that the legal mandates he received from the superintendent's office in a single year weighed in at 45 pounds (Howard, 2004). The job has become virtually impossible to do well. Small wonder, then, that thoughtful educators increasingly recognize that administrators, in order to discharge their responsibilities, must cultivate a culture of inquiry and responsibility for student learning among their faculties. They must, in other words, cultivate teacher leaders. As Elmore (2000) describes it,

> the job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contribution to the collective results (p. 15).

The School Improvement Imperative

Schools are under unrelenting pressure to improve results for all students, with a particular focus on those students previously underserved. That is, schools must at least make progress toward closing the achievement gap among different groups of students. Of course, a political agenda drives some of the initiatives (from both federal and state agencies), but thoughtful educators support at least the aims of the legislation and regulations, if not the details of implementation. In any event, schools are the locus of accountability; the school can be shut down if it does not show adequate results.

Principals are the technical leaders of schools, and the buck stops with them. They recognize, however, that they cannot improve schools by themselves. There is increasing recognition in both the academic and the practitioner literature that even if principals wanted to be the sole leaders of their schools, they could not meet the standards now being set for them. As Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) put it, "When given opportunities to lead, teachers can influence school reform efforts. Waking this sleeping giant of teacher leadership has unlimited potential in making a real difference in the pace and depth of school change" (p. 102).

Professionalization of Teaching

It is generally accepted that the most important factor contributing to student learning is the quality of teaching, supported by other components in the school's organization such as the curriculum, the programs and policies for students, and the nature of connections with the external community. And with increasing external pressures for high-level and universal student achievement, many educators recognize that administrators alone do not effect that achievement. Even if they want to maintain a traditional and hierarchical structure, administrators must find ways to unleash the expertise of the teachers on their staffs and to capture the energy and knowledge of those who know the most about what works in the classroom.

Traditional views of leadership as residing exclusively in administrative positions portray teachers as immature beings (children, almost) who need direction and guidance. Some definitions of teaching regard important curriculum design decisions as better left to experts, with teachers implementing others' designs. By contrast, the view of teaching that underlies the concept of teacher leadership sees teaching as professional work in which teachers are informed by professional research and make complex decisions and exercise judgment and autonomy in support of student learning. Teaching requires complex decision making, frequently under conditions of uncertainty and high levels of pressure. Therefore, the role of leadership in a school setting, whether exercised by teachers or administrators, involves supporting the decision making of teachers in the service of student learning.

Related to the professional nature of teaching is the concept of expertise and where it resides. In any bureaucratic structure in which one group of individuals (administrators) exercises supervisory control over another (teachers), it is assumed that those with authority also have the greater expertise. That is, if the principal's role is seen to be that of improving instruction, it is assumed that the principal is more of an expert on teaching than are the teachers. This may not be the case. It is virtually impossible for an administrator of a secondary school to be knowledgeable about all the subjects taught there and their accompanying pedagogy. Similarly, primary teachers may be more expert in the area of early childhood learning and development than the administrators who supervise their work. The concept of teacher leadership, while acknowledging the essential role of administrators in ensuring at least a minimum quality of teaching and supporting its continuing improvement, also recognizes that the expertise in a school, in both the content and in the methods of instruction, rests with teachers. The concept also

reshapes the role of site administrator to that of facilitator of learning for both teachers and students.

Thus, the idea of teacher leadership stems from a conceptualization of teaching as complex work requiring expertise, judgment, and a high degree of autonomy (informed by a knowledge of the professional literature). Teacher leadership is exercised in the equally complex environment of schools, school districts, and government agencies. Small wonder that it is a concept that has not been fully described or elaborated.

Issues Involved in Teacher Leadership

Some educators may fear that teacher leadership would be difficult to bring to life in their own setting. Indeed, there are issues that could present obstacles to fully enabling teacher leaders to emerge. These issues are discussed in the following sections.

Contested Ground

Little (1995) and, later, Lieberman and Miller (2004) describe the "contested ground" between teachers and administrators. Some administrators are reluctant to cede what they consider their authority to teachers, and they don't provide sufficient opportunities for teachers to work together and exercise leadership responsibilities. Granted, this research was conducted primarily within the context of appointed leaders (for example, department chairs), but the concern is also real in a more informal definition of teacher leadership presented here.

The issue is more than one of time for teachers to work together; it is about power. Principals play an essential role in effective schools. Teachers know that. They know that they can obtain their best results with students only in a school that is well managed under the guidance of a strong instructional leader. But principals, when recognizing and cultivating teacher leadership, enhance their own standing within the school. It is one of the surprising features of leadership that in sharing power, one increases one's authority. This issue will be addressed more fully in Chapter 8.

Negotiated Agreements

In some school districts, contracts negotiated with teachers unions include specific guidelines regarding what teachers may and may not be asked to do in the school. Virtually all contracts specify the number of contact minutes teachers have with students. But others also specify that teachers will be compensated for any time they spend on

school matters beyond student contact hours. This typically includes such things as helping out in the lunchroom or the playground and may extend to other matters, such as supervising student activities and clubs. Such provisions may make it difficult for teachers to take on projects on their own initiative. It is not the purpose of this book to undermine either the letter or the spirit of negotiated agreements; their provisions prevent teachers from being exploited and have done a great deal for the profession. At the same time, however, it would be regrettable if these agreements became obstacles to the professionalism of teaching and the efforts of gifted teachers to exercise leadership. In some situations the unions have taken the lead, offering opportunities to their members to acquire leadership skills and to take on projects requiring initiative and support. The recognition that such teachers receive serves to strengthen the profession.

State Requirements

In virtually every state, teachers no longer receive a permanent license to teach; rather, a license is granted for a fixed term (for example, five years) and is renewable on demonstration of a certain amount of professional development, typically counted in "hours." And in some school districts, teachers are eligible for movement on the salary schedule based on their work in school and district projects. The activities of teacher leaders could be accommodated by these arrangements; it is conceivable that a teacher leader's project could satisfy state or district requirements or be sufficient to result in movement on the salary schedule.

Teacher Leadership Versus Formal Roles

Teacher leaders can emerge in many different ways. Occasionally, an external mandate imposes a new requirement on schools, such as extensive teacher and student use of computers, and a teacher proposes an innovative way to address the mandate (Lieberman & Miller, 2004). In such cases, the teacher leader is opportunistic, using the mandate (and sometimes the funding that accompanies it) as an excuse to mobilize colleagues and pursue important work. In other situations, the initiative is one that simply arises from a perceived need, without the push from external factors.

In either type of situation, what began as a spontaneous exercise of teacher leadership may metamorphose into a more formal role. Margaret's BIG Lessons (from Chapter 1) did just that. Her project began as something she did in her school in which colleagues became interested. However, in the ensuing years, with recognition and funding from

state agencies, it has become a formal responsibility three days a week. She continues to teach, but she is also project director of the BIG Lesson concept in Michigan. Similarly, a state initiative for increased technology use was mandated by Maine in 2001. It attracted a teacher who saw a way to implement the initiative in a manner clearly superior to that proposed by the state agency. When it was recognized as such, the state contracted with her to coordinate the statewide effort. In these instances, the teacher leaders did not remain full-time teachers; at least temporarily, their responsibilities changed.

The Relationship with Accomplished Teaching

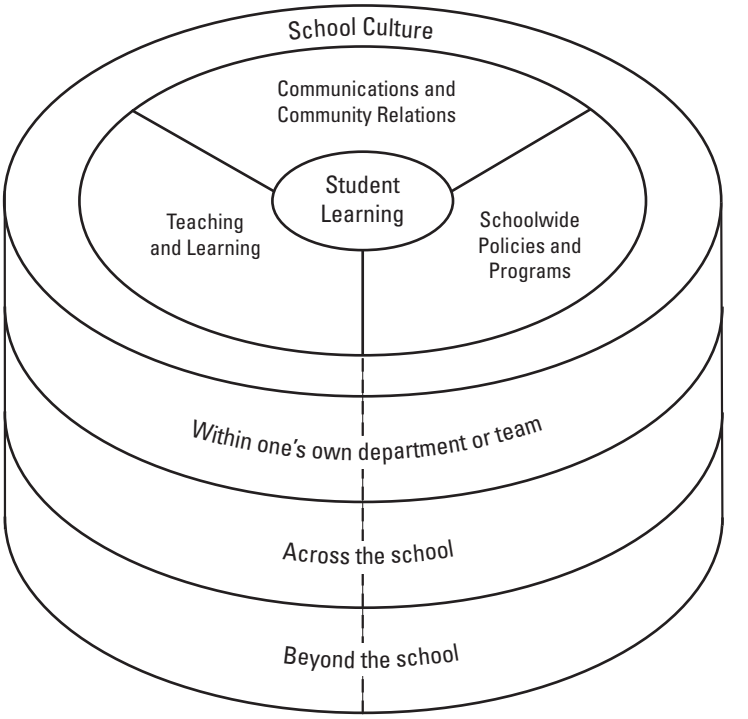
Some educators argue that teacher leaders have already been identified and recognized through certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. It is true that the National Board process is rigorous and very worthwhile, and that one of the portfolio entries does touch on teacher leadership. But in the main, teachers earn National Board certification by demonstrating their excellence in the classroom, by reflecting thoughtfully on their practice, and by demonstrating deep knowledge of their subjects, their students, and the principles of instructional design.

It is important that teachers who aspire to leadership roles within their school have demonstrated excellence in teaching and been recognized as skilled by their colleagues. This provides critical credibility. That is, a teacher's first responsibility is to her own students; it is only when teaching performance is at (or above) standard that teachers can truly assume leadership roles. Furthermore, other teachers are far more likely to join an effort with a colleague if that teacher is respected in the school as an exemplary teacher.

How Teacher Leadership Is Demonstrated

Teacher leadership may be exercised in any area of school life. This framework for teacher leadership is divided into three areas: schoolwide policies and programs, teaching and learning, and communications and community relations. Each area contains three or four smaller areas, as illustrated in Figure 2.1. For example, Margaret's concept of the BIG Lesson initially involved a different relationship with a community agency (the museum) that later affected instructional practice. Tom's interest in differential participation rates by different groups of students focused initially on instructional practice but had implications for student assignment to classes. And Elena's looping project squarely concerned the school's organizational structure.

FIGURE 2.1
The Framework for Teacher Leadership



Furthermore, teacher leadership is exhibited in any number of settings in the school: within one's own instructional team or department, throughout the school, or beyond the school in the district, the state, or even the entire nation. For example, Tom's effort in his high school was conducted primarily within the math department, although it spread to the entire school and beyond. Elena's efforts in looping affected the entire school (or at least half the school—the primary teachers) right from the outset. Margaret's BIG Lesson began as a project in her own class but has now spread across the state. Teacher leaders who operate at the state and national level are the voice of teachers on state policy boards or on broader curriculum committees.

None of these settings is to be preferred over any other; they are simply different locations of work. Furthermore, it is sometimes more of a challenge to convince one's

close colleagues to attempt a new approach than it is to promote something on a state or even national level; a department or team is more like family and may be more critical of one's ideas. These settings, together with the areas of school life in which teacher leadership might be demonstrated, are summarized in Figure 2.1. In Part II of this book, examples of teacher leadership activities in each of the three settings will be provided for each area of school life.

The concept of teacher leadership recognizes the daunting challenges confronting schools of the 21st century and the need for schools, as organizations, to meet those challenges through innovative structures. Clearly, the strict bureaucratic hierarchy is not sufficient, nor are other approaches that place teachers in the role of receiver of accepted wisdom. Rather, to bring the best to bear on the challenges of education, the engagement of teacher leaders in the enterprise is an important component of any improvement strategy.

Teacher leadership is an idea whose time has definitely arrived. The profession, through the work of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, has identified the characteristics of accomplished teachers and has devised methods for recognizing that level of performance. In addition, educators have identified the components of skilled administrative leadership. The time has come to render the same service for those teachers who choose to remain primarily teachers of students, but who have the inclination and the skill to extend their reach. The framework for teacher leadership represents a movement in that direction.