Supporting Teacher Learning and Leadership: Progress and Challenge

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Introduction

The literature on teacher leadership describes the more broad and varied leadership opportunities in recent years that have moved beyond the few formal and managerial roles of the past, which often took expert teachers out of the classroom. This "third wave" of teacher leadership development recognizes the important work that teachers engage in with colleagues both formally and informally to inquire and learn about practice (Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan, 2000). Researchers have advocated for and local educational agencies (LEAs) have widely implemented professional learning communities as both a structural and cultural support for teacher learning and school improvement (Dufour, Eaker, & Dufour, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2005; Harris & Muijs, 2005). Indeed, there is greater recognition that teachers engage in learning in order to lead efforts to improve practice and that their engagement in collaborative leadership activity with their colleagues and others produces new learning (MacBeath & Dempster, 2009; Poekert, 2012). That is, teachers deepen their understanding of the particular focus of change, the process of organizational change, and themselves as participants in a change effort. Further, the notion of distributed or shared leadership has gained momentum and holds promise for transforming how schools are led as administrators and teachers share responsibility for school governance and school improvement (Firestone & Martinez, 2007; Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Spillane, 2005).

The Leadership for Learning (LfL) framework was developed through an international collaboration of researchers, educators, and others as a model for teacher learning and shared leadership focused on student learning (MacBeath & Dempster, 2009). The five principles of the

model include: a focus on learning, supportive conditions for learning, inquiry-based teacher dialogue, shared leadership, and shared accountability for student learning. The model resonates for us in terms of our own research and the broader research literature. In this paper, we use this conceptual framework as a lens to examine both the progress and problems in making the LfL model a reality in schools, where all teachers have opportunities to engage in authentic leadership both individually and collectively. Specifically, we focus on two areas we see as most challenging for schools currently: attention to the conditions for learning and a shared sense of accountability.

Our discussion draws upon our own research through case studies of schools in Maine, USA, the broader literature on teacher leadership, and our professional experience teaching and collaborating with teachers and other school leaders engaged in graduate study of educational leadership at the University of Maine. Most recently our research has explored how teacher leadership emerges within different school contexts and grade levels in the different spheres of leadership activity (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012) and how teachers influence each other and understand their leadership (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014). In addition, we have worked with various LEAs and professional organizations in the state on issues of leadership including: teacher leadership, coaching mentors of new principals, and coaching teams of teachers working on reform initiatives. Another source of evidence informing this paper is the Maine Department of Education (DoE)'s case studies of LEAs that have been part of a pilot effort to implement proficiency-based standards and assessments (Center for Best Practice, Maine DoE).

We begin with a discussion of the challenges in supporting teacher leadership in schools, and then examine evidence of progress toward realizing the LfL model. We end with some recommendations for more coordinated effort at all levels in the educational governance system

to facilitate the shift to a new paradigm of teacher leadership in which learning and leadership are simply accepted as part of the professional work of teachers. Although not every teacher will take the "lead" in the collective work of school improvement, teachers can demonstrate collective leadership through their engagement in learning with colleagues and through the power of relational influence (Donaldson, 2006; Rost, 1993).

Challenges in Fully Realizing Leadership for Learning

Our work with schools and teachers in Maine, USA has illuminated both areas of progress and persistent challenges or barriers for teacher leadership today. While large variation exists both across and within schools, there are some general trends we have noted that are consistent with findings within the broader research literature. Among the five principles of the LfL framework, we see the most progress in three areas: teachers sharing a focus on improving their own learning for the purpose of improving student learning, teachers dialoguing to share ideas about how to improve practice and student outcomes, and administrators willing to share leadership responsibility with teachers and supporting a broader range of leadership opportunities for teachers. Two areas where reality is further from the rhetoric are supporting and maintaining the conditions for teacher learning and teachers collectively sharing the responsibility or accountability for school improvement.

Conditions for Teacher Learning

The research literature has described many elements that need to be in place in order to support a robust climate and culture for teacher leadership for learning. In our study of Maine schools, the elements which continue to be most challenging for schools and for teachers include: time to engage in learning focused on problems of practice, access to broader knowledge networks, and professional development to learn how to be a collaborative leader.

Time for learning. Schools in the US have lagged far behind schools in other countries in terms of the number of hours and quality of professional development for teachers (Darling-Hammond et al, 2009). Further, with the strong focus on accountability in recent years, much of the formal professional development time offered in schools in the US has shifted to a more narrow focus on implementing federal and state education policy mandates, such as adopting new curriculum standards and assessments or examining assessment results to identify students needing interventions. While these activities are important for providing the conditions to support student learning, they more closely serve the purposes of accountability rather than teacher learning, professional development, and the process of organizational change.

In addition, some of the curriculum reforms aimed at improving student outcomes have required teachers to increase instructional time on certain content areas and skills, reducing flexibility in the daily school schedule and leaving less time for teachers to meet together (Glencross, 2014). The benefits of regularly scheduled professional planning and learning time have been described in the literature (Darling-Hammond et al, 2009; Harris & Muijs, 2005; Poekert, 2012). Yet, the reality is that many schools in Maine and elsewhere in the US do not have time scheduled daily for teachers to meet together to discuss teaching and learning. Their time to meet with colleagues is often restricted to once a week or less, formally structured by the school or school district, and focused on curriculum planning and review of assessment results.

Broader knowledge networks. Research has also affirmed the need for schools to support teacher learning by facilitating their participation in broader knowledge networks, such as partnerships with institutions of higher education (Frost & Durrant, 2003; Vernon-Dotson & Floyd, 2012) and collaborative relationships with other schools or regional and national networks and professional organizations (Harris & Muijs, 2005). Exposure to broader knowledge

networks can serve as inspiration and catalyst for teachers to experiment with new approaches or innovate (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012, Harris & Muijs, 2005). These connections also provide validation and recognition for teachers who feel isolated in their efforts to improve conditions in their school (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012).

Yet many schools, and particularly small schools in rural settings, have been less successful in establishing formal relationships with knowledge networks outside their LEAs. Some of the challenges include: time and incentives for teachers to engage with other professionals, geographic distance between schools or schools and universities, and financial resources to support the development and maintenance of more formal collaborative partnerships. Schools may have the desire to work together and universities may espouse the mission of collaboration with schools but, without a reliable source of funding and staffing to coordinate these efforts and compensate professional time, willing partners cannot realistically engage in collaborative work.

Learning how to lead collaboratively. Despite the expansion in opportunities for teachers to engage in shared leadership in their schools, there has been little attention to preparing and supporting teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to effectively negotiate new relationships with their colleagues and others and to navigate the challenging process of organizational change (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006; Smylie & Mayrowetz, 2009). In schools we studied, we found teachers feeling bruised even years after they had encountered hostility from colleagues or vocal parent groups resistant to proposed school-wide changes. Substantial attention in the literature has pointed to the social and emotional challenges teachers may face when they take on leadership roles in their school, particularly formal roles (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006, 2007; Donaldson et al., 2008). Colleagues may view the teacher leader as

having "moved to the dark side" and intentionally resist or isolate the teacher leader (Margolis & Huggins, 2012). Even when teachers lead in more informal ways, they risk incurring resentment or hostility from colleagues (Barth, 1999; Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012; Heifetz & Linsky, 2004).

The collective work of negotiating different teacher perspectives around instructional goals, vision, pedagogy, and responsibility for student outcomes is supported through a culture of mutual respect and trust (Donaldson, 2006; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). However, this hard work also requires effective communication and interpersonal behaviors for all participants and skillful facilitation and intrapersonal or self-reflective knowledge for leaders to support the process of collaborative work among teachers (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Yet many teachers do not have formal opportunities to learn these skills, other than through the sometimes brutal and unpredictable experience of trial and error.

Shared Accountability

Responsibility and collective efficacy for student learning. While one might expect the recent focus on accountability for student outcomes to have engendered a collective and shared responsibility for student learning, the effect has been more to increase the tendency to finger pointing or blaming, demoralization of teachers and school heads, and psychological detachment from school-wide outcomes. Policymakers blame teachers for the lack of progress in student achievement while teachers point to the social conditions that reduce students' school readiness, ability to learn, and support for learning at home. When the problem seems overwhelming to educators, there is a reduced sense of collective efficacy, that is, the belief that together they can be successful in turning around school performance. Teachers traditionally focus on the students in their classrooms, often feel competitive with other teachers, or may simply assume they have

no responsibility for what happens in the rest of the school. In some cases, apathy takes hold and teachers withdraw from collective efforts to improve teaching and learning in their school.

Another contributing factor to the lack of a collective sense of responsibility and efficacy is that teachers continue to have minimal authority in deciding on the direction of school improvement efforts, including the focus of their own professional development and learning. A majority of schools continue to direct this work through school leadership teams that are strongly directed by administrators. Administrators engage teacher involvement in the work, but specify the focus and scope of improvement efforts. Some administrators are unwilling to fully share leadership responsibility with teachers, while others are simply following a well-entrenched paradigm for school leadership. Even in cases where administrators ask teachers to identify the problems and strategies for improvement, teachers may still feel they lack the authority they need to pursue transformational change (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012; Harris & Muijs, 2005). In one high school we studied, a leadership team member described their work this way,

> There is a great deal of discussion and teacher members are afforded equal voice on the team but follow up action is missing. This is due to the fact that team members feel that the onus of taking action is actually on the principal himself. Others on the team do not take responsibility for carrying out suggestions because they see the principal as ultimately responsible for the actions. Members feel that until action is taken by the principal and it becomes known that the LST [Leadership Support Team] was the impetus for these actions, other faculty members really have no way to recognize their role in school improvement efforts. The formal role of the principal is respected in that members do not feel they have the right to take over his role. Members do not feel empowered enough to take action themselves.

Research has demonstrated that teachers who have opportunities to experience true collaboration and shared leadership feel a sense of increased responsibility as well as self- and collective efficacy for improving student learning in their schools (Harris & Muijs, 2005; Vernon-Dotson & Floyd, 2012)

Leadership roles and identities. In our study of schools and teachers in Maine, we've found a strong persistence of traditional notions of teacher leadership as formal leadership roles conferred by administrators (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014). Moreover, teachers were reluctant to use the term "leader" or "leadership" when describing their work. Instead, they described being a "pioneer," "pulling together," being part of a "think tank," or "leading by example." Teachers said, "I am a team member, a willing co-laborer" and that leadership is "what we do, not who we are" (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014). For the most part, teachers regarded their leadership activity as a normal part of their professional role, but they did not see leadership as an important part of their identity. They emphasized the informal ways they collaborate as more important and impactful for school improvement than formal leadership. One high school teacher explained: "Formal leaders are considered leaders because of the positions they hold and may or may not be effective. Informal leaders, while they may not hold a defined leadership position, are always effective."

It is somewhat perplexing that teachers continue to resist the idea and labels of leadership, while there is substantial evidence that they are initiating and conducting important work to improve teaching and learning in their schools through a broad range of both formal and informal roles and activities (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012; Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008; Poekert, 2012). One major obstacle seems to be the enduring norm of egalitarianism that has characterized the teaching profession for decades and the perceptions of risk in putting oneself forward as a "leader" (Gonzales, 2004; Mackenzie, Jones, & Ribeiro, 2007; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). But a larger problem is that notions of school leadership in practice have been slow to align with the broader conceptions of distributed or shared leadership in the literature, and there has been little to guide schools in how precisely to establish new structures, relationships, and

cultural norms to allow for a new leadership paradigm (Margolis & Huggins, 2012). Another reason to support school partnerships in broader knowledge networks is to challenge outdated notions of teacher and administrator leadership.

Another factor contributing to teachers' reluctance to regard themselves as leaders is the lack of self-confidence in their own leadership knowledge and skills (Harris & Muijs, 2005). This insecurity relates to the lack of formal opportunities to develop as leaders. Even as teachers embark on leadership activity such as facilitating professional learning groups, developing curriculum, or writing grants with colleagues and others, feelings of self-doubt and hesitancy may restrict their actions and limit their impact. In one middle school we studied, some teachers were not comfortable with the idea of presenting information in formal meetings with colleagues or parents and expressed gratitude that other teachers were willing to take on that role. Martha, a librarian in a combined middle and high school, initiated a critical friends group for teachers to informally share ideas about practice with the goals of reducing teacher isolation and promoting increased collegiality in her school. Yet, Martha expressed self-doubt about her own leadership, as evident in the following comments:

> My behaviors as a school leader are probably inconsistent. I want to know what others think, but may be unhappy if they don't agree with me. . . . I value everyone's ideas and opinions, regardless of their rank or status in the school hierarchy. While I want to share my opinions and ideas, I often wait to be asked, which may keep me from being heard.

This veteran educator gained confidence from her success and subsequently initiated other more formal leadership efforts with a broader scope of impact in her school. While teachers develop more confidence through the experience of working with others (Harris & Muijs, 2005; Vernon-Dotson & Floyd, 2012), the learning curve could be dramatically shortened by engaging all pre-service and in-service teachers in professional development that focuses specifically on developing their leadership knowledge, skills, and confidence.

Promising Practices that Build the Capacity of Teachers as Leaders

While our previous discussion focused on some of the factors that limit opportunities for teachers to engage in collaborative learning and leadership, there are pockets of promising practice in schools in Maine and elsewhere. In this section we describe examples of school practices as well as efforts by the state educational agency and university to ramp up opportunities for teachers to learn how to lead effectively, to engage with their colleagues in collective leadership activity, and to feel a collective sense of responsibility for student learning. We provide examples of progress across all five principles of the LfL model, starting with the three areas where we have seen the strongest evidence of progress.

Focus on Learning

An example of teachers sharing a focus on improving their own learning for the purpose of improving student learning is the proliferation of instructional coaching. Math and literacy coaching has become a role for teacher leaders. In Maine, such content area coaches are classroom teachers who function as a coach in a school or LEA, either full or part time. As part of a collaborative inquiry experience of several years sponsored by several universities in the state, they learned about coaching as well as met with others who brought their problems of practice of coaching back to the group for consultation and critique. The Maine Department of Education (DoE) has recently established a broader network called Literacy for ME (Maine DoE). The comprehensive plan for the network provides resources and frameworks for all school levels and promotes the development of community partnerships focused on literacy.

Another example of a focus on learning is the growing practice of teachers examining student assessment data together throughout the year in order to identify instructional strengths and weakness and to adjust student assignment to interventions as needed. Further, many schools

have initiated a shift to a more differentiated instructional approach or even individualized pacing through the curriculum. These efforts all put student learning at the center and provide guidance to teachers for changing classroom practice. Granted these initiatives derive from the focus on assessment data and their meaning for school ratings and funding, but participation on Response to Intervention (RTI) teams or data teams in schools provides many teachers opportunities to share insights about practice and develop learning goals for students that are not only meaningful but shared among faculty members (Center for Response to Intervention).

Inquiry-Based Dialogue

There are many examples of teachers dialoguing to share ideas about how to improve practice and student outcomes. Professional learning communities (PLCs) have become the vehicle for teacher conversations about practice. Individual teachers are trained in facilitation and teachers convene in PLCs to delve into relevant topics, examine data, or concentrate on interventions for individual students. The term is ubiquitous and the DuFours have been perennial presenters at state conferences, such that the term is used by many LEAs to generally describe ongoing meetings of teachers working on a particular task. Nevertheless, the focus is on teacher conversation, and time is designated for this purpose.

Shared Leadership Responsibility

We also have seen that some administrators are increasingly willing to share leadership responsibility with teachers and to support a broader range of leadership opportunities for teachers. The latest Race to the Top initiative involves educator evaluation. As much as the concept has raised the ire of teachers' organizations, there have been positive results in the emphasis on both teaching and leading and the complexity of evaluating both. The focus on rubrics and ratings is unfortunate, but the work of system-wide groups of teachers and

administrators developing plans and piloting them has implications for the kind of leadership we see teachers taking on.

The state mandated a collaborative process for development of the evaluation plan and insisted that a majority of teachers participate in the process. The law also insists that all evaluators be specifically trained and that a steering committee has established valid and reliable measures (An Act to Ensure Effective Teaching and School Leadership, 2012). One formal teacher leader, a high school department head of a large (over 1,000 students) high school in Maine, is a member of her city's teacher evaluation oversight committee. She writes, "Educators must see themselves as continually improving and see evaluation as a useful tool for improvement" (Thibedeau, 2014a). She worries, though, about the amount of work the new plans require on top of the already burdensome press for accountability. Policymakers and educational leaders are rightly focused on teaching as the key to learning, but reforming the evaluation process--even with significant input from teachers—has the potential to become another area where compliance leads to feelings of meaningless hoop-jumping.

Conditions for Teacher Learning

Even in the areas where we feel the reality of schools comes up short against the LfL framework, there are still some glimpses of positive movement and practices that hold promise for improving the conditions for teacher leadership. We have seen effective teacher leadership in schools or LEAs that embrace the notion of instructional leadership as the basis for school-level leadership. In these contexts, teachers have the experience of teaching, reflecting, and sharing the results of their classroom experimentation with colleagues. They develop effective curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments, and they support and critique practice. This does not mean that principals do not have a role as instructional leaders in these schools, but they see their

prime function as providing the necessary resources and conditions for teachers' leadership of and for learning.

Important conditions to help teachers take on this function are structural and cultural: they need time together to learn and discuss children's learning and they need an environment where their learning about learning is expected and valued (Harris & Muijs, 2005). There can certainly be teacher learning and teacher leadership of learning without these, but to make a difference in a school or a system, there must be a structure and culture that fosters them in a systemic way (Fullan, 2004). The conditions for learning, specifically provision of time, supportive collaborations, and leadership development are the structural and cultural changes we have seen that encourage teacher leadership within LEAs and through networks.

As state and school budgets are slashed, more schools are reverting to a model that was, until recently, almost extinct in our small rural state: teaching principals. This role is reminiscent of Barth's vision of principals as "principal teachers" in a school. One teaching principal describes her collaborative leadership approach in a K- 5 school:

> I rely on my colleagues often as their opinion is meaningful and often insightful. It is through our work together as a group that I can better equip myself with the tools necessary to be a better leader, and teacher….I would never assume that my way is the best, or treat my staff like their input does not matter. I value everyone's contribution and have found that resolution takes collaboration.

Some superintendents recognize the need for teachers to understand their important role in the leadership of a school and design professional work and development around it (Firestone & Martinez, 2007; Galluci, 2008). The Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction (CAI) in a large LEA demonstrated her keen understanding of the interpersonal dynamics essential to effective leadership relationships when she disbanded the former Teacher Leader Committee and created teacher leader groups called "collaboratories," each with an area of

focus, such as K-5 Math, Assessment, and Communication Coordination. Members choose their team based on interest and expertise and the CAI Director co-facilitates each session. Within each work session, members use "the specific, operational, workable, measurable, and observable goals" (Johnson & Johnson, 2013, p. 77) that enable the members to contribute, work in small groups, and debrief each session. Furthermore, members often make decisions with feedback from colleagues, thus encouraging collaboration within their own schools. One member, a teacher in a graduate program said, "Collaboratory members advocate for the needs of their schools, grade spans or subject areas. This advocacy has generated rich conversation and respectful dissent among members. Individual, group, and organizational communication with all constituencies is encouraged as collaboratory members are urged to be transparent, to share the work they do (formally, as well as informally) with colleagues."

Several schools are part of the National School Reform Faculty (NSRF). This network, among other things,

- provides a structure for school people to work together in "critical friendship," looking closely at one another's practice and helping to improve and adapt it;
- begins with work on individual practice, then builds toward an understanding of whole-school/district culture and organization;
- provides on-going consultation and support for leaders
- works with national school reform networks whose members use NSRF to accelerate their whole-school change efforts (National School Reform Faculty).

Critical Friends Groups (CFGs) have ongoing membership and use protocols to help teachers zero in on problems of practice. Some LEAs provide stipends for the extra time that all teachers spend in CFG meetings and/or encourage voluntary membership. CFGs support teachers in

making their teaching "public" and learning how to be truly collegial while increasing their own and their students' learning. One teacher reflected on her coaching of a second-grade team to her CFG group of fellow coaches:

> Through active listening I was able to hear the concerns that came up as we implemented a new reading program. I was able to question so that we discussed and brainstormed solutions instead of just complained. We then took time to reflect and make adjustments.

The groups are vehicles for change in that they provide support for the coaches, who are also group members, through a network which fosters development of facilitation skills as well as collaboration on issues of school reform.

Like many states, Maine offers incentives to teachers to participate in the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) program. A study of Maine NBPTS-certified teachers found that there are conditions conducive to their leadership of and for learning in schools where there is a critical mass of Board certified teachers (Mackenzie & Harris, 2008). Just this spring NBPTS launched a concerted effort with the US Department of Education to expand the capacity of teachers as leaders. Arne Duncan said, "Teach to Lead seeks to catalyze fundamental changes in the culture of schools and the culture of teaching so that teachers play a more central role in transforming teaching and learning, and in the development of policies that affect their work" (NBPTS). The federal Teacher Incentive Fund has provided resources to support Maine Schools for Excellence (MSFE) which is a group of seven LEAs using National Board criteria in the creation of meaningful evaluation systems for teachers and leaders and providing opportunities to expand teacher leadership to increase capacity to improve practice and student learning (MSFE).

Collective Responsibility and Authority for Improving Learning

The principle of shared accountability in the LfL framework is the most elusive to enact and thus study, even as it represents what we espouse as the ideal of teacher leadership. Our vision of teacher leadership expands to all teachers involved in the collective work of leading school improvement (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012). Sharing the work of instructional leadership must lead to sharing the responsibility for the learning of all students in a school (Tucker, 2014).

The pressures of NCLB have highlighted teachers' and administrators' accountability for increasing student learning. School test scores and grades for schools put accountability front and center in educators' and citizens' minds. We know, however, that being accountable can be very different from feeling accountable, especially when built upon the shared leadership underlying the LfL. There are a few things we can point to in our state that give some credibility to the claim that schools and teacher understanding is improving in this area.

Charter schools have only recently been allowed in Maine. Already there are six charter schools, one of which is a virtual school. In Maine at least, charters are very small and have few resources beyond the public allotment. They generally have teaching principals, and teachers-as-leaders is key to their functioning. The charters on which they are predicated describe not only the product but also the process of student learning, so stakeholders know the goals and agree on the measures of performance. Because their mission is clear and all educators on the staff know the specific outcomes by which they will be measured by the state's Charter Commission, teachers share accountability for all students' learning.

Although charters are still controversial, especially in a state with dwindling resources, they provide a model for school leadership that represents Barth's vision (1988) articulated nearly three decades ago. A community of learners should become a community of leaders where everyone is appreciated for and expected to fulfill tasks in the best way he or she can, so

that leadership is part of the responsibility of all members of the school community. Collective efficacy develops from both the structure and the culture of these evolving educational organizations.

There are several initiatives the Maine DoE has undertaken to develop capacity for schools and systems to meet the challenge of proficiency-based learning under the heading of *Education Evolving; Maine's Plan for Putting Learners First* (2012). The state has encouraged and even supported networks or communities of practice to this end. Almost all LEA's have been part of the Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI) since its inception in 2001. Initially begun to provide laptops to all 7th and 8th grade students and teachers, it now supports laptops or iPads in two thirds of the state's high schools as well. Not only does the funding prescribe teacher leader roles, but it also has continually provided professional development around technology use and integration with subject content.

Maine has subscribed to the Common Core and is working with Smarter Balanced to implement assessments based on the Common Core next year. Maine is one of seven states with schools involved in the Re-Inventing Schools Coalition (RISC). The work of this organization is to help schools move toward proficiency-based learning through principles that include "Leadership — the deliberate focus on developing strong leaders at every level … and Shared Vision — the education community speaking as one voice" (RISC). The Center for Best Practice has made available comprehensive case studies of the systems' progress in this work. Collaboration and leadership capacity-building are two notable themes of the case studies, just as a focus on and accountability for student learning are both the process and the product of the shared work across the constituents (Center for Best Practice).

Understanding and Improving Leadership Capacity

While not all teachers have the opportunity to study the concept of leadership and develop their own leadership skills and confidence, graduate degree programs in educational leadership at our university provide the kind of complementary instructional leadership schools need now. In these programs, we emphasize that students (who are practicing teachers and administrators) are not preparing for an administrative role; they are already leaders in various ways in their schools. What they learn in our three-year Master's cohort program is how to analyze their school's needs and their own leadership capability so they can develop the skills and understanding needed to improve student learning. Learning in the "lab" of a community of learners and leaders promotes the application of that learning in their present and future positions.

Educators recognize their interdependence, as both teachers and leaders, and they acknowledge what they need to learn. They realize the importance of trust—in themselves and in each other (Donaldson, Marnik, Mackenzie, & Ackerman, 2009). They are more able to help their school communities affirm their implicit knowledge, that is also confirmed in the research, that teachers' work has a direct and strong impact in helping students meet learning goals (Darling-Hammond et al, 2009; Harris & Muijis, 2005; Marzano, Walters, & McNulty, 2005). Gordon Donaldson, now professor emeritus, describes the three streams that constitute our vision of school leadership: Open, trusting affirmative relationships; commitment to mutual purpose with moral benefit; and shared belief in action-in-common (2006, pp. 52-60). In our educational leadership programs at the University of Maine, we cultivate leadership capacity through the Interpersonal-Cognitive-Intrapersonal (I-C-I) model of leadership development, which our students use to analyze their learning needs and plan their learning, primarily in the realms of the inter- and intrapersonal. Students develop successive leadership development plans and assess

themselves against program objectives by providing evidence of their work and reflection. In addition, they articulate their beliefs about schooling and continually analyze their strengths and weaknesses to plan for learning new skills and developing self-understanding (Ackerman, Donaldson, Mackenzie, & Marnik, 2009; Mackenzie & Marnik, 2008).

Our students often go through a major shift in their thinking as they come to believe and act on the idea that teachers are legitimate leaders because of their knowledge of and clear focus on student learning. They recognize their role involves continuous learning about students and their learning; furthermore, they must participate in collaborative decision-making not just with colleagues but also with other stakeholders of the school. Graduates of the program indicate that they rely on the vision of collective leadership to inform their actions and priorities as they wend their way through the work of instructional leadership no matter what role they play in schools (Thibedeau, 2014b). We have anecdotal evidence, coupled with student documentation, that our educational leadership students are moving their colleagues in the direction of accepting their role in the leadership of the school which, in turn, means accepting responsibility for learning of all students in a school.

Concluding Thoughts and Implications

In this paper, we have used the Leadership for Learning (LfL) framework as a lens to focus on areas of progress and areas of continuing challenge. Drawing on the literature, our own research in Maine schools, and recent initiatives of LEAs and the state educational agency, we have seen the most progress on three of the five principles of the LfL model: a focus on learning, inquiry-based dialogue, and shared leadership. The increased use of instructional and school coaches, professional learning communities, critical friends groups, and teacher involvement in school improvement efforts and evaluation of effective practice are all indicators of attention to

three of the LfL principles. Two areas remain particularly challenging: supporting the conditions for teacher learning and shared accountability for student learning.

The challenges related to supporting teacher learning center primarily on the provision of resources such as time for learning during the workday, opportunities to partner with knowledge networks, and professional development focused on both leadership skills and pedagogical content knowledge. Such resources require both financial resources and the political will to make these efforts a priority. The continuing fiscal constraints we have seen at the state and local levels for education in Maine, as elsewhere, make funding for these resources a challenge. Similarly, the prevailing focus on maximizing student learning time and the time teachers spend on managerial work to meet accountability demands compete with the equally compelling need for time for teachers to engage in collaborative inquiry, learning, and creating.

There are many ways that state and local policymakers can support change—both large and small—in the way time is allocated and in leadership development for teachers. Some strategies to increase time for teacher learning and/ or collaboration may include: lengthening the work day for teachers to build in professional time (as we see in many countries with high-performing students); eliminating redundant and excessive student testing and increasing time for instruction and teacher professional development which have greater potential to improve student academic performance; and implementing a more equitable system of financial incentives to motivate and reward teachers for collaborative work and leadership activities.

Strategies to support teachers' leadership development and knowledge include: providing financial support for teachers' graduate study in their content area or educational leadership; incorporating professional development on best practices in leadership and collaboration into both pre-service and in-service teacher training for all teachers, as a requirement for certification

and re-certification of teachers; and improving the coordination between the state educational agency, LEAs and universities to develop and maintain regional teacher networks and collaboratives that focus on supporting teacher professional knowledge and leadership development for the purpose of school improvement.

The challenge of promoting shared accountability for student learning is less easily addressed by fiscal resources or policy directives and revolves around cultural views and professional ethics and efficacy. Socio-cultural attitudes and expectations about students influence a teacher's sense of responsibility for students in the school. Also important are personal goals, understanding of professionalism, and level of self-efficacy. School variables such as teacher morale and confidence in school leaders and colleagues also impact a teacher's willingness to assume shared responsibility for student learning. In our study of teachers in Maine, we have consistently seen a strong sense of responsibility toward students in one's own classroom but weaker collective accountability for all students in the school.

Making shared accountability a reality in schools will require a stronger effort and more coordination among state policymakers, LEAs, and universities that train teachers. All levels of the educational governance system need to work together to redefine the professional work and role of teachers for the kind of schools we envision and see described in research literature. In essence, this requires a major paradigm shift for teachers to accept the charge of responsibility for all students to learn in their schools. It means that it is no longer acceptable to close the classroom door and deliver effective teaching to one's own students while ignoring the struggles of teachers and students down the hallway. Collective accountability means that teachers will need to reach out to colleagues for ideas and help, and those with exceptional skills and innovative approaches will have time to share their expertise with others.

State policymakers and universities can also help by making teacher leadership and shared accountability a part of the curriculum for all pre-service teachers. LEAs can select strong school leaders who communicate high academic expectations for students and the value of shared accountability. School leaders can implement structures and encourage behavioral changes to make teachers an equal partner in shared governance and accountability. Professional networks or regional collaboratives can reinforce the idea of shared accountability in the new definition of teacher professionalism and leadership through formal professional development and informal interactions with teachers. These kinds of efforts have the potential to transform school culture and the professional work and impact of teachers.

We subscribe to Spillane's description of "leadership practice" (Spillane, 2005, p. 144): It involves multiple leaders, both from formal and informal leadership positions; followers are a part of the practice; and the interactions among the leaders and followers are critical. The responsibility for leadership functions involve multiple leaders who work in a coordinated, or even uncoordinated, manner. "Distributed leadership" parallels Rost's (1993) definition of leadership, "Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 102). Leadership is not a quality of a person or a role; it is the interaction of all the people (in this case, the professionals in a school) that is the leadership moving the school in a particular direction.

We see potential for all teachers participating in leadership in the way we describe and, ultimately sharing in accountability for all students' learning, in the coming together of the initiatives of proficiency-based teaching, learning, and student assessment and professional evaluation/professional growth plans. Shared accountability is implied in proficiency-based teaching and assessing. Data analysis leading to instructional improvement of student learning

will be seen as a communal challenge. The focus on a comprehensive view of the work and responsibilities of teachers will incorporate the analysis of data and instructional improvement plans such that the information provides a clear path forward for the members of the school community to lead and follow in a multitude of situations. Teachers will be collaboratively examining teaching practice; mentoring; deciding on interventions and differentiation strategies for students; developing effective curriculum, units, and lessons; learning new and more complex ways of teaching and assessing student learning, to name a few. Their teaching and leadership expertise will be used and developed more fully as they engage in this work. Moreover, they will appreciate the contributions of their colleagues as they all share in the outcomes for students of their communal efforts.

Everyone will have to work toward finding a comfort level with shared work, shared leadership, and shared responsibility for learning in their schools, so that all teachers and administrators feel as if they are equal members who have a stake in the forward movement of the school toward realizing improved learning of all students. The process of learning and changing is embedded in the leadership of the school so that all teachers are seen as and understand that they are important participants in leadership.

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