Transformational Teacher Leadership

EXPLORING INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONDITIONS, KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE, AND SUPPORTS INFLUENCING ENGAGEMENT

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

In the escalating complexities of today's schools, teachers face demands, responsibilities, and accountability regarding student achievement and school performance. Because of these increasing pressures, it is important for schools to provide not just adequate leadership engagement opportunities for teachers but exciting, stimulating, and inspirational engagement opportunities. This study focuses on teacher perceptions regarding individual and organizational conditions, knowledge, experience, and supports needed to foster teacher leadership engagement at all levels of the organization. Concentrated through the theoretical lens of transformational teacher leadership, the following questions are posed in search of actionable strategies:

1) What individual (teacher) and organizational (school and district) conditions influence teacher engagement in transformative leadership (both formal and informal)?

2) What knowledge, experience, or supports do teachers need to engage in more transformational leadership?

Illuminated by previous work in teacher leadership and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978), this study approaches the work by merging the two lenses and creating a third lens - the transformational teacher leadership framework. Through qualitative and quantitative measures, this study explores factors needed for teachers to be transformational in their daily work in and beyond the classroom and across the district. Building on previous research that focused on the impact of transformational leadership and teacher leadership on organizational performance, loyalty, job satisfaction, and commitment of followers, this study goes a step farther by exploring the potential of teachers to adopt transformational characteristics and become transformational teacher leaders outside the administrative context. By considering the conditions under which teachers perceive opportunities for transformational leadership engagement in their current role, this study identifies possibilities for teacher participation in leader-infused activities without the traditional necessity of leaving the classroom to join the administrative level.

Using a mixed method design with qualitative and quantitative data collection measures, this study resulted in the following findings:

Finding 1: Teachers that reported organizational cultures supportive of teacher leadership engaged in more informal leadership activities. Teachers who reported a readiness for transformational leadership engaged in more formal leadership activities.

Finding 2: Teacher engagement in formal and informal leadership varies by Grade Level and Years Teaching.

Finding 3: Teachers reported that the key knowledge, experience, and support needed for teacher leadership engagement included **Teacher Voice** at all levels in the district. They emphasized the importance for active Teacher Voice to be invited and included in decision-making, idea-generation, policy-making, feedback, visioning, and campus & district planning.

Finding 4: Teachers reported the importance of **Empowerment** as an individual and organizational condition supporting teacher leadership engagement. They emphasized the importance for empowerment through culture, structures, knowledge, experience, and supports that provide avenues for vision-building, autonomy, decision-making, respect, collaboration, motivation, and innovation.

Finding 5: Teachers reported a lack of campus and district-wide communication and advocated the importance of more **Communication** in facilitating increased teacher leadership engagement. It is important for teachers to know, experience, and be supported by impactful channels of communication between teachers and administration, to solve the "I Don't Know" and "I Haven't Been Asked" dilemmas by better understanding system-wide processes leading to teacher engagement, and to learn protocols for either being invited or initiating participation in teacher leadership.

Finding 6: Teachers reported the need for expanded **Collaboration** with colleagues in and across their campus and throughout the district to facilitate teacher leadership engagement. Collaboration includes 3 components to expand knowledge, experience, and supports for teacher leadership: collegial collaboration, vertical alignment, and campus-to-campus interaction.

Finding 7: Teachers reported a key support needed for teacher leadership included a stronger culture of **Appreciation**. Emphasizing that it's *little things* that can make a significant difference in capacity for leadership engagement, teachers expressed a need to work and thrive in a culture of appreciation, value, affirmation, encouragement, and acknowledgment for their contributions, expertise, skills, and ideas.

Finding 8: Teachers reported a key knowledge, experience, and support for teacher leadership included a sense of **Purpose** (the "why") on two levels: *organizational* - school vision, policies, programs, decisions, and opportunities; and *individual* - personal vision, motivation, and meaningfulness. When these connections are clear, and when teachers see the impact of their efforts, stronger alignment exists between opportunities and motivations for teacher leadership engagement. Moreover, teachers reported a key motivating factor for leadership engagement included improving school conditions.

Finding 9: Teachers reported the need to strengthen **Relationship-Building** opportunities in the district to increase teacher leadership engagement trough meaningful friendships, impactful networks, and a sense of bonding to others and the organization. Teachers reporting both strong and weak levels of relationships stressed the importance of the district prioritizing connections among fellow teachers, administration, and students to nurture teacher leadership engagement.

Due to the large number of findings, it was important to draw out key takeaways to serve as a connecting link between the findings and the recommendations. Four key takeaways include:

Takeaway 1: Teachers of the Year offer an untapped wellspring of potential. Generally expressing increased levels of empowerment for teacher leadership, they can serve as a voice for fellow teachers, mentor new teachers, serve as model teachers for observation, and function as leadership magnets to draw others into teacher leadership engagement.

Takeaway 2: Widespread **variation** exists regarding teachers' lived realities and experiences with cultural and structural conditions contributing to teacher leadership engagement. While some teachers report strong connections with leadership-fostering organizational conditions, other teachers report weak connections, resulting in variance across the district.

Takeaway 3: **Organizational Culture** supportive of teacher leadership is the key driver for increased transformational teacher leadership engagement. Prevailing themes include teacher voice, empowerment, collaboration, communication, appreciation, and relationships.

Takeaway 4: A Purpose Principle: Teachers reported the importance of connecting their motivation for engagement with the purpose of the engagement. Teachers indicated that knowing the *why* and the *impact* of their engagement served as motivators for participation. Moreover, teachers indicated that improving school conditions was a motivating factor (above compensation, professional growth, and recognition) for teacher leadership engagement.

Based on these findings and key takeaways, 5 recommendations are suggested for East Horizon School District in their efforts to identify organizational and individual conditions, knowledge, experience, and supports needed to foster transformational teacher leadership engagement.

Recommendation 1: System Thinking - Adopt a systems approach to better understand linkages, relationships, and interactions between organizational and individual purpose, context, policies, activities, and their impact on teacher leadership engagement across the district.

Recommendation 2: Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership - Implement Culture-building practices to support all transformational teacher leadership engagement. Focus on factors including teacher voice, empowerment, appreciation, purpose, and relationships. In so doing, the organization can begin to explore existing variation between teacher experiences.

Recommendation 3: Collaborative Connections Across Campuses - Implement a district-wide LEAD Initiative, including LEAD Teams, a K-12 Idea Task Force and Idea Emporium; Vertical Alignment (content & curriculum); and New Teacher Mentoring not limited to, but with a specific and intentional inclusion of TOYs. This recommendation addresses Cultural capacities for teacher voice, empowerment, collaboration, purpose, and relationship-building.

Recommendation 4: Communication - Implement a 4-Step Communication Guide by redesigning system-wide communication processes for consistent, & timely transfer of information from administration to teachers and from teachers to administration. Adopt a Learning Stance through curiosity and feedback loops. Create Pathways for Participation through engaging mechanisms to articulate campus and district processes and actively promote teacher leadership engagement opportunities. Explain the purpose and the *why*.

Recommendation 5: Forever TOYs Society - Formalize an impactful role for TOYs by creating the EHSD Forever TOYs Community of Practice for current & former Teachers of the Year. TOYs can facilitate collaborative & relationship-building engagement, lead New Teacher mentoring, foster connections across campuses, & serve as a Voice for All Teachers.

Context and Phenomenon of Interest

Institutional Context

Located in a state in the southern United States, the focal organization of this study comprises one of the school districts in the county. The district includes approximately 2,700 students (PreK – 12th grade) and 253 certified teachers and administrators. Using a pseudonym to provide confidentiality for the organization, the district will be referred to in this work as "East Horizon School District (EHSD)." EHSD is a fully accredited public school system and embraces a mission statement that focuses on providing a safe learning environment with challenging educational opportunities for all students, cooperative partnerships with family and community, and an atmosphere that facilitates lifelong learning.

Discussions with the EHSD superintendent focused on organizational capacity to more effectively support teacher engagement in leadership opportunities. The superintendent expressed a need for the district to explore teacher perceptions about leadership capacity and to identify individual and organizational conditions, knowledge, experience, and supports that facilitate formal and informal teacher leadership engagement at all grade levels. In ongoing conversations with the Superintendent, it was determined to focus on the district's capacity to support teachers interested in formal leadership as well as teachers who desire to remain in the classroom and lead in informal ways (for example, by starting an art club, sponsoring an after-school program, hosting a workshop, etc.).

This work focuses on identifying individual and organizational conditions, knowledge, experience, and supports that contribute to the advancement of transformational teacher leadership engagement, teacher perceptions about empowerment, the types of formal and informal leadership activities in which teachers are interested, and school structures and culture influencing teacher participation. By better understanding the perceptions of EHSD teachers, the district hopes to strengthen transformational teacher leadership engagement, increase teacher leadership capacity, and build a pipeline of future leaders (both formal and informal) at all levels in and across the organization. Existing formal and informal leadership-oriented organizational opportunities include but are not limited to the following activities outlined in *Table 1*:

Table 1: Formal and Informal Leadership Activities at EHSD

Formal	Informal
Grade-Level Leader	Mentoring
Department Leader	Before-school / After-school Activities
Building Leader	Volunteer Committees
Curriculum/Instructional Leader	Attendance at school-sponsored events, games, ceremonies, concerts, and productions
Teacher Mentor	Hosting faith-based study groups
Committee Member	Sponsoring academic clubs or student organizations
Teacher of the Year	Campus activities (academic pep rallies, etc.)

Phenomenon of Interest

The purpose of this study is to investigate teacher perceptions about individual and organizational conditions, knowledge, experience, and supports that facilitate teacher engagement in formal and informal (York-Barr and Duke, 2004, p. 263-265) transformational teacher leadership at East Horizon School District. Specifically, the study's focus includes these five factors of interest (*Table 2*):

Table 2: Factors and Objectives

EHSD (5) Primary Factors	Objective
Readiness for Transformational Leadership	Understand teacher perceptions of readiness for formal and informal leadership, knowledge and competency, willingness, motivation, and leadership engagement.
Empowerment	Understand teacher perceptions of empowerment including respect, recognition, initiative, decision-making, vision-building, networking, innovation, motivation, collaboration, & organizational/individual goal-reaching regarding teacher leadership engagement.
General School Culture	Understand teacher perceptions of work environment, shared vision, improving practice, and time for leadership engagement.
Organizational Structures Supporting Teacher Leadership	Understand teacher perceptions of structures (processes, systems, procedures, and guidelines) as a condition for leadership engagement.
Organizational Culture Supporting Teacher Leadership	Understand teacher perceptions of culture (customs, habits, practices, norms, networks, and relational activities occurring across and throughout the organization) as a condition for leadership engagement.

Conceptual Framework, Definitions, and Literature Synthesis

Conceptual Framework

Drawing on the work of teacher leadership and transformational leadership theory, this study explores individual and organizational conditions, knowledge, experience, and supports teachers need to engage in formal and informal leadership in the district. By fusing together the concepts of transformational leadership and teacher leadership into a single conceptualization of "transformational teacher leadership," this work unpacks contributing factors influencing teacher engagement in transformational leadership activities. Through the transformational teacher leadership conceptualization, terms were defined and measurements were designed to illuminate teacher perceptions about the engagement impact of the following five constructs: readiness for transformational leadership, empowerment, general school culture, organizational structures supporting teacher leadership, and organizational culture supporting teacher leadership.

To infuse existing concepts from the literature into the disciplined inquiry to guide this work, the following definitions are proposed:

Conceptual Definitions

Transformational Leadership

A paradigm of leadership that empowers others through idealized influence (role modeling), inspirational motivation (inspiration), intellectual stimulation (creative challenging), and individualized consideration (personal concern) to strive for and achieve extraordinary outcomes while also developing followers' capacity for leadership.

Teacher Leadership

Teachers at all levels of the organization who are empowered to influence others and exhibit formal and informal leadership capacity individually and collectively in and beyond the classroom, campus, and district.

Transformational Teacher Leadership

The capacity for teachers within organizational structure and culture to be empowered to enhance individual and collective goals, pursue creative initiatives in meaningful work, influence decision-making, and participate in activities that contribute to leadership development and leadership engagement.

Teacher Engagement

The degree to which teachers at all grade levels initiate, are involved in, and participate in formal and informal leadership opportunities in and beyond the classroom, on their campus, and across the district.

Literature Synthesis

Transformational Leadership

In his review of the literature on transformational leadership, Anderson (2017) emphasized organizational complexities facing today's educational leaders and the acknowledgment by many researchers that transformational leadership serves as the most relevant style of leadership in schools today. As a theoretical framework, transformational leadership garnered the most attention in the educational setting and was researched more often from 1990-2003 than all other leadership theories combined (Sun, 2017).

Introduced as a foundational leadership theory by Burns (1978), transformational leadership acknowledges the complexity of the leadership process, stresses the relational and motivational dimension of leadership, augments transactional leadership, transcends self-interest to promote the common good (Bass and Riggio, 2006), and is morally uplifting. Burns sought to explore the nature of leadership (as a special form of power) by viewing power and leadership "not as things but as relationships" (Burns, 1978, pp. 11-12). By investigating power, purpose, motivations, values, interaction, learning, leadership, and followership, Burns emphasized that although all leaders are power holders (potential or actual), not all power holders are leaders, and the critical variable is purpose. Burns defined leadership not as leaders getting followers to do what the leaders want but engaging with others to "raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (1978, p. 20). Ultimately, Burns spoke of the armament of transformational leadership as elevating, causative, morally purposeful, collective, and as having the capacity to lift people "into their better selves" (p. 462).

The "Four I's" of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985) include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These four categories identify core components of leadership that can help spur performance beyond expectations. Activating the potential to develop leaders at all levels of the organization, transformational leadership is inspirational, adaptive, optimistic, aligns leader-follower goals, builds capacity for self-efficacy, reduces stress, and fosters organizational change and leader development (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Boal and Bryson (1988) reflected on transformational leadership's capacity to "lift ordinary people to extraordinary heights" (p. 11) and Yukl (1989) asserted that it inspires followers to "do more than they are expected to do" (p. 272). Moreover, transformational leadership prompts organizational members to transcend mechanical compliance, go beyond the routine expectations of daily requirements (Katz & Kahn, 1978), and contribute to an organizational culture of mentoring, role modeling, relationship-building, confidence-building, and identity-building (Sosik, Godshalk, & Yammarino, 2004). Finally, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter (1990) suggested a 6-categorial transformational

leadership model including articulating a vision for the future, providing an appropriate role model, fostering the acceptance of goals, setting high performance expectations, providing individual support, and providing intellectual stimulation.

Teacher Leadership

In the literature on teacher leadership, multiple definitions accompanied by organizational complexities contribute to the lack of a universally agreed-upon definition of teacher leadership. Muijs and Harris (2003) assert that "overlapping and competing" (p. 438) definitions of the term contribute to conceptual confusion. York-Barr and Duke (2004) suggest teacher leadership includes establishing relationships, breaking down barriers, and marshalling resources throughout the organization, while Cannata, Engel, Nguyen, and Curran (2017) offer a definition that includes organizational tasks leaders might be expected to perform, including instructional leadership and school and building leadership. Other definitions assert teacher leaders are those "who lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners, and influence others toward improved educational practice" (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001, p. 17). It is Katzenmeyer and Moller's definition that assists in constructing the conceptual bridge from a distributive theoretical lens to a transformational theoretical framework that is utilized in this paper, and it is this definition that most closely aligns with the context-specific definition of teacher leadership in this work. Additional components in this study include the capacity for teacher leaders to engage in individual or organizational levels in both formal and/or informal leadership activities.

Methodological difficulties exist in the attempt to quantify the impact of teacher leadership due to the complexities of the phenomena itself. Although less research has been done and less evidence exists to support a positive relationship between teacher leadership and student outcomes, there is evidence to support the positive impact of teacher leadership on teacher self-efficacy, relationship-building, involvement, decision-making, knowledge, and organizational development (Harris, 2005). Exploring new approaches to teacher leadership, Smylie, Conley, and Marks (2002) espoused the potential of viewing teacher leadership less through the individual occupying the role and more through an organizational view of leadership where many organizational participants at all levels can imbue the role of leadership.

Establishing linkages between teacher leadership, principal leadership, school leadership, and transformational leadership, Leithwood focused on elements of school structure, complexity, accountability, performance improvement (Anderson, 2017), organization, and followership (Onorato, 2013) in connection to teacher leadership. Focusing on teacher leadership (informal and formal) as a process of influence, Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (2003) asserted that organizations successfully foster it through shared decision-making and teacher professionalization, especially in facilitating teacher leadership outside the classroom. Seven organizational conditions impact leadership practices, including mission and vision, improvement planning processes, culture, decision-making structures, decision-making processes, policies and procedures, and school-community relations. Importantly, building a collaborative culture strengthens an organization's capacity to foster teacher leadership in a vibrant system of idea exchange, innovative thinking, and creative problem-solving.

Transformational Teacher Leadership

Relevant to this study on factors influencing transformational teacher leadership engagement, Bass and Riggio (2006) emphasized "leadership is not just the province of people at the top. Leadership can occur at all levels of an organization and by any individual in that organization…it is important for leaders to develop leadership in those below them…to stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity" (pp. 2-3). They encourage leadership at all levels, not just the highest levels, of an organization. A tenet of the transformational leader is to influence, develop, and produce more transformational leaders. As Sosik et al. (2004, p. 245) noted:

> [Both] mentors and transformational leaders act as role models who encourage learning and development, and work to develop others' self-confidence, personal identity, and well-being. Thus, transformational leaders likely serve as mentor, and mentors likely exhibit various degrees of transformational leadership behavior.

In this conceptualized model of transformational teacher leadership, one component includes a potential mentor-like relationship between the leader and follower that supports engagement (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). Although less is known about *how* they do it, transformational leaders develop followers to be creative, stress-resistant, high-performing team contributors and flexible change agents, and they also inspire followers to build and expand their own leadership capacity to become transformational leaders themselves (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational teacher leaders can impact organizational culture by casting vision, creating a sense of purpose, empowering others to perform beyond their expectations and self-interest for the good of the organization, and realigning old culture with new vision (2006).

By situating teacher leadership engagement in the transformational leadership framework, a synthesized categorial lens provided conceptual clarity. Bass and Riggio's (2006) Four I's provide a particularly helpful conceptual framework for the synthesis of teacher leadership and transformational leadership together (*Table 3*):

Table 3: The Four I's of Transformational Leadership

Concept	Description
Idealized Influence	- Role Model, admired, respected, ethical & high standards - Leader-Follower identification - Interactional (leader behavior & elements attributed to leader by followers) - Consistent, capable, persistent, determined & willing to take risks
Inspirational Motivation	- Motivational, enthusiastic, inspirational, optimistic - Provide meaning & challenge to followers - Create team spirit & communicate expectations - Articulate compelling vision & generate follower involvement
Intellectual Stimulation	- Encourage creativity & facilitate innovative thinking - Follower involvement in problem-solving - Embrace new ideas, new angles, & new approaches
Individualized Consideration	- Coach & mentor followers - Attentive to individual needs and follower goals - Provide supportive environment, delegate but support, and listen - Foster 2-way communication exchange & personalized interaction

Bass and Riggio (2006) assert organizations need to nurture transformational leadership at all levels. Today's schools face heightening organizational complexities (Anderson, 2017), turbulence, problems, uncertainties, ever-changing environments (Bass & Riggio, 2006), and accountability pressures that contribute to a growing need for teachers to be empowered to practice not as followers only but as transformational visionaries themselves.

Strong effects of transformational leadership focus on multi-faceted dimensions, including impact on teacher commitment (Dumay, 2012), innovative climate (Sarros, Cooper, Santora, 2008), effort, satisfaction, and performance (Bass, 1985), trust (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Boal and Bryson, 1988; Yukl, 1989b; Kouzes and Posner, 1987), commitment to a task, an organization, personal values, teams, leaders, careers, or work groups (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The commitment, loyalty, and satisfaction of followers of transformational leaders highlights complexities involving membership, self-identity and group identity, intrinsic values, goal accomplishment, beliefs, trust, empowerment, efficacy, and leader self-sacrifice. Organizational commitment and strong organizational citizenship was found more often in followers of transformational leaders, but the mediators included trust in the leader and a belief the leader was fair. The term "transforming leadership" has been used to emphasize the reciprocal relationship between leader and follower (Bailey and Axelrod, 2001), and Leithwood and Poplin (1992) suggest transformational leadership facilitates a redefinition of people's mission and vision, a renewal of their commitment, and the restructuring of their systems for goal accomplishment.

Competing Theoretical Perspectives

While adopting the transformational leadership framework for this project, it is important to acknowledge the wide array of theoretical approaches and the significant role of distributed leadership theory (Harris, 2004; Leithwood and Jantzi, 1998; Cannata, Engel, Nguyen, and Curran, 2017) in the teacher leadership literature. Additional theoretical frameworks include but are not limited to participative leadership (Leithwood and Duke, 1999), directive leadership, task and relations-oriented leadership, charismatic leadership, organizing leadership (Ogawa and Bossert, 1995), and identity leadership.

Distributed leadership served in the past as a preferred framework for teacher leadership, as it "concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization, rather than seeking this only through formal position or role (Harris, 2004, p. 13)." Distributive leadership "focuses on how leadership practice is distributed among formal and informal leaders" (p. 13) and promotes a greater level of teacher effectiveness (Leithwood and Jantzi, 1998). However, plaguing much of this work are ambiguous definitions of conceptual leadership frameworks. This confusion serves a note of caution that "both teacher leadership and distributed leadership have been loosely defined constructs" (Cannata et al., 2017, p. 2) and contributes to questions about "how and why teacher leadership is distributed to certain teachers" (p. 20).

Although framed in the distributive lens, the suggestion that when it comes to improvement initiatives (like this study's transformational teacher leadership focus), a strong influence includes school culture (Deal and Peterson, 1998; Fullan, 2001a, 2001b; Griffin, 1995; Talbert and McGlaughlin, 1994), which comprises two of the five factors explored in this work. York-Barr & Duke (2004) build on this concept by asserting three dominant categories influencing

teacher leadership including school culture, roles and relationships, and structures. Anderson (2008) asserts the distributive leadership landscape is fertile ground for transformational teacher leadership, particularly for teachers embracing leadership beyond the scope of traditional leadership roles.

As a learning organization, East Horizon School District strives to adopt practices that build capacity for formal and informal teacher leadership opportunities. Since clear linkages are suggested between teacher leadership and teacher learning (Harris and Muijs, 2002), this carries strong implications for improvement initiatives in a learning organization like EHSD. An important goal is to attend to both the "conditions inside schools through which [teacher leadership] can be facilitated" (Cannata et al., 2017, p. 4) and the traits of teachers who pursue teacher leadership experiences (Donaldson et al, 2008; Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Hallinger and Heck's (1998) four proposed school conditions through which leadership exhibits its influence include purposes and goals, school structure and social networks, people, and organizational culture. Their four conditions align with this study's conceptualization and data instrument design.

This work was designed to strengthen EHSD's ability to influence teacher leadership engagement at all levels and to build collective and individual leadership capacity. Day & O'Connor (2003), Day (2000), and Ayman et al. (2003) noted, "There is a distinction between leader development and leadership development. Leader development focuses on the enhancement of the individual leader, whereas leadership development looks at how the leaders and followers – the group or organization as a whole – can develop shared leadership capacity" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 142). This distinction contributed valuable insight to this study in the quest to elevate the organization's capacity to strengthen collective leadership capabilities.

Research Questions and Contribution to the Field

Research Questions

Incorporating both the transformational teacher leadership framework and East Horizon School District's unique organizational needs, the following study questions were created to explore formal and informal transformational teacher leadership engagement:

Research Question #1	**What individual (teacher) and organizational (school and district) conditions influence teacher engagement in transformative leadership (both formal and informal)?**
	■ What is the relationship between organizational structures supportive of teacher leadership and teacher engagement? ■ What is the relationship between organizational culture supportive of teacher leadership and teacher engagement? ■ What is the relationship between *readiness* for transformational leadership and teacher engagement? ■ What is the relationship between empowerment and teacher engagement? ■ What is the relationship between general school culture and teacher engagement?
Research Question #2	**What knowledge, experience, or supports do teachers need to engage in more transformational leadership?**
	■ What knowledge, experience, or supports most influence teacher engagement? ■ What are the perceptions of Teachers of the Year regarding the knowledge, experience and supports needed to influence engagement?

Contribution to the Field

Past research produced a substantial amount of insight into the transformational leader themselves (the leader-centric perspective) and the outcomes of transformational leadership on followers and organizations. However, less research has been conducted to illuminate the organizational conditions, relationships, processes or *systems* that foster transformational leadership or highlight the relationship between leader and follower (Bass and Riggio, 2006) or leader and organizational structures and culture. This study contributes insight to the field by exploring the individual and organizational conditions - including readiness for transformational leadership, empowerment, general school culture, organizational structures, and organizational culture supportive of teacher leadership - that foster transformational teacher leadership engagement. By selecting the teacher-level unit as the unit of analysis instead of the administrative-level, this study expands past research by exploring processes of followers adopting transformational leadership attributes and broadening their capacity for school-wide influence while remaining in the follower (non-administrative) role.

Burns (2003) explored this concept in *Transforming Leadership* when he suggested viewing the entire leadership process in terms of a *system* where leader and follower roles are understood but where individuals float between and in and out of the roles. It is within this system - richly

complex in today's educational organizations - that the challenge of improving teacher engagement in leadership opportunities exists. As Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, and LeMahieu state in *Learning to Improve* (2017), improvement science focuses on the system by exploring "specific tasks people do" (informal and formal leadership), the "processes and tools they use" (leadership engagement pathways and opportunities), and "how prevailing policies, organizational structure, and norms affect this" (readiness for transformational leadership, empowerment, general school culture, organizational structure, and organizational culture) (p. 7-8). Traditionally, teachers interested in leadership capacities left the classroom and joined administration. This study contributes valuable insight for how teachers can remain in the classroom and still exhibit leadership influence at the building, campus, and district-level.

Finally, this study expands knowledge in the field by drawing out perspectives of Teachers of the Year on teacher leadership engagement. This group of exemplary teachers offers a unique and diverse array of perspectives into the organizational conditions that most influence transformational teacher leadership and can contribute rich understandings and deeper meanings to the complexities fostering or inhibiting teacher leadership engagement in the district.

Study Design and Methodology

Patton's (1999) counsel to "do one's best to make sense of things" and to recognize "different kinds of data capture different things" (p. 1195) served as a guidepost for this research design. By striving to acquire relevant data through a quantitative approach and to hear the "heart" of teachers through a qualitative approach, a mixed-methods design was chosen to inform study questions. While Babbie (2017) suggested methodology is "the science of finding out" (p. 4), Patton referenced the artistry of methodology with the assertion that qualitative and quantitative methods can be "used in a complementary fashion" (p. 1194). Babbie (2017) asserted "researchers find the safest ground when they employ several research methods in studying a given topic" (p. 288). As Richards and Morse (2012) suggest, the objective includes a "golden rule of respecting methodological cohesiveness…(that) ensures maximal validity" (p. 193).

In the spirit of ensuring that rigorous inquiry can work in the complexities of a real-world school, this study's design used qualitative and quantitative instruments to achieve a balance in applied research. Ongoing discussions with EHSD's Superintendent crystallized two study questions and led to a mixed-methods design with organization-specific data instruments including a customized teacher survey, personal interviews, and Teacher of the Year (TOY) focus groups. Vanderbilt University's Institutional Review Board approved the research project design and data collection instruments (Appendix D). Once the respective analyses were complete, an additional review of the data synthesized themes between the various modes of data measurement.

In recent years, a leadership-development survey had been conducted at EHSD, and it included elementary teachers. It was not accessible for this study, and the lack of pre-existing data underscored the need for a customized survey to gain an in-depth understanding. To obtain district-wide data and to link research questions with data collection instruments, it was determined that all certified teachers in the district would be invited to participate through surveys and interviews (*Table 4*). In subsequent conversations with the Superintendent, it was decided to use focus groups as a unique outreach to current and former Teachers of the Year. Teachers of the Year represent extraordinary achievement and excellence in the classroom and exhibit those qualities beyond the classroom as well. Exploring the potential of TOYs to richly inform the study questions, a portion of the qualitative methodology focused on this group. Through the operationalization of two focus groups, TOYs shared their perceptions and ideas on potential district efforts to improve organizational conditions for teacher leadership engagement.

Unit of Analysis

By focusing the lens of transformational leadership beyond administrative leaders to the teacher level, this study explores the conditions most influential for transformational teacher leadership engagement. Since transformational leadership can be taught and learned (Bass & Riggio, 2006), it may serve as a beacon for management development initiatives in organizations (Pounder, 2003), educational institutions, schools, and classrooms.

Table 4: Research Question Alignment with Key Concepts and Methods

Research Questions	Concept/Variable	Data Collection Method
RQ1: What individual (teacher) and organizational (school & district) conditions influence teacher engagement in transformative leadership (formal and informal)?	Relationships between teacher engagement in transformational leadership and: 1. Organizational structures supportive of teacher leadership 2. Organizational culture supportive of teacher leadership 3. Empowerment 4. General school culture 5. Readiness for transformational leadership	1.Quantitative - Survey to all district certified teachers 2. Qualitative - Personal interviews with volunteer teachers
RQ2: What knowledge, experience, or supports do teachers need to engage in more transformational leadership?	1.Factors (knowledge, experience, & supports) identified by teachers as necessary for engagement 2.Teachers of the Year perceptions on teacher engagement	1.Qualitative - Personal interviews with volunteer teachers 2. Quantitative - Teacher of the Year focus groups

Quantitative Methodology

To inform study questions for this work, a 59-question quantitative survey instrument was developed and distributed to all certified teachers in the district. Surveys are particularly effective in studies where individuals are the unit of analysis, and where it is important to gather original data from a group unavailable for interview or observation (Babbie, 2016). Although validated survey instruments exist in the transformational leadership field (*Table 5*), a customized survey was developed for this study to address the merged conceptualization of transformational teacher leadership.

Table 5: Existing Instruments of Measurement for Transformational Leadership:

Author	Measurement Instrument
Bass and Avolio (1990)	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) - assesses the Full Range of Leadership (FRL) Model
Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990)	Transformational Leadership Behavior Inventory
Alban-Metcalfe & Alimo-Metcalfe (2000) and Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe (2001)	Transformational Leadership Questionnaire
Carless, Wearing, & Mann (2000)	Global Transformational Leadership Scale
Sashkin (1996)	Leadership Behavior Questionnaire
Kouzes and Posner (1988)	Leadership Practices Inventory
Other	Diaries, interviews, observational methods, and alternative pencil-and-paper measures.

{*Cited from Bass & Riggio, 2006*}

Additionally, teacher leadership and effectiveness surveys exist that assess leadership capacities by teachers. However, for this study, the conceptualization focused on the merged concept of *transformational teacher leadership*. It was necessary to operationalize this concept by designing an instrument specifically for these study questions and the focal organization. Drawing on an established survey of the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher Questionnaire (2011-2012), a customized survey instrument was developed (Appendix C).

Definitions

Research Question #1 focuses on identifying individual (teacher) and organizational (school and district) conditions that influence engagement in formal and informal transformational teacher leadership, and Research Question #2 focuses on the knowledge, experience, and supports needed to facilitate teacher engagement in transformational leadership. Tailored to organizational needs, this study's definition of transformational teacher leadership aligns with EHSD's objective to identify structures and culture supportive of teacher leadership in and beyond the classroom. The hypothesis states that teachers' individual and organizational transformational leadership capacity will contribute to an improved understanding of structures and culture that facilitate teacher leadership, increase empowerment, and foster engagement in formal and informal leadership. Five constructs were operationalized for the quantitative measurements:

readiness for transformational leadership; empowerment; general school culture; organizational structure; and organizational culture supportive of teacher leadership (*Table 6*).

Table 6: Construct Definitions

Construct	Definition
Readiness for Transformational Leadership	Individual and collective engagement in formal/informal leadership development, opportunities, influence, and activities in and beyond the classroom, across campus, and throughout the district, including mentoring, modeling, professional development, leadership competencies and motivations for involvement and improvement.
Empowerment	The individual, collective, and informed capacity to exhibit initiative, vision-building, respect, decision-making, recognition, individual and organizational goal-setting, empowerment, collaboration, networking, motivation, and innovation.
General School Culture	Individual and collective participation and involvement including practice improvements, shared visioning, satisfactory work environments, and time for engagement.
Organizational Structure	Processes, systems, procedures, and guidelines established in the organization.
Organizational Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership	Collective manifestation of customs, habits, practices, norms, networks, and relational activities occurring across and throughout the organization.

Quantitative Data & Analysis

Survey Development and Implementation

Using Vanderbilt's secure survey design software, RedCap, a custom survey was constructed. Operationalizing the five constructs of transformational leadership readiness, empowerment, general school culture, organizational structure, and organizational culture supportive of teacher leadership, the survey measured individual perceptions regarding teacher leadership engagement. For deeper insights, the survey included a qualitative component with 6 open-response items in a "Start-Stop-Keep" format and one "Final Thoughts" text box at the end. The open-response items are described in the qualitative methodology section later in this paper.

The 59-question survey was sent to all 253 certified teachers in the district, used multi-choice check-boxes, and a 5-option Likert-scale. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The neutral "No Opinion" option was included, as it could contribute information about participants who might be undecided or apathetic about a topic:

Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	No Opinion	Somewhat Agree	Agree

The study launched in January (Appendix E) with an email from the EHSD Superintendent, providing an overview to teachers and inviting their honest perspectives. The survey was sent to all 253 district certified teachers, including administrative positions who were current or former teachers and/or still classified as district certified teachers. In the initial email, the Superintendent described his hope that the study might help identify the effectiveness of existing structures and develop opportunities to engage teachers as professionals. Attached to the Superintendent's email was a personal invitation from the researcher, providing additional survey details and an opportunity to volunteer for a personal interview. This introductory email was followed up during the subsequent 6 ½ weeks of the survey window with reminder emails from the researcher and a final invitation email from building-level principals.

Administered through RedCap, the survey was anonymous. Thus, teachers who completed the survey early continued to receive follow-up emails about participation. Survey response rates are detailed in *Table 7*. In the quantitative analysis, submissions not qualifying as complete were omitted from the statistical analysis. To better understand confounding variables impacting the key outcome of formal and informal teacher leadership engagement, questions included the number of years teaching, grade level, and current levels of formal/informal leadership.

Table 7: Survey Response/Completion and Key Outcome Variable Responses

	Total Response	Total Completions	Years Teaching	Grade Level	Formal Engagement	Informal Engagement
Survey Completions	159 / 253 (63%)	133 / 159 (84%)	99 / 133 (74%)	97 / 133 (73%)	53 / 133 (40%)	67 / 133 (50%)
Cumulative Count					85	191

Table 8 shows the number of respondents who completed the Grade Level and Years Teaching survey items (some respondents skipped these items). To provide additional details regarding the scope of the survey instrument, a Survey Summary Statistics Matrix was created (Appendix H).

Table 8: Grade Level and Years Teaching Response (N=133)

	Project Survey	District-Provided Data	Survey Participation % Per Grade
Grade Level			
Elementary	42	60	70%
Middle	16	54	30%
High School	31	61	51%
Other	8		
Years Teaching			
1-2 years	9	--	--
3-5 years	11	--	--
6-10 years	11	--	--
11-15 years	12	--	--
16-20 years	14	--	--
21+ years	42	--	--
Mean	13 years	15 years	--
Years Teaching at this School			
1-2 years	20	--	--
3-5 years	19	--	--
6-10 years	17	--	--
11-15 years	14	--	--
16-20 years	10	--	--
21+ years	19	--	--
Mean	9 years	9 years	--

One of the survey's limitations included its inclusion of untested items. To that point, because survey items had not been pre-tested or peer-reviewed, it was important to determine the reliability and internal consistency of the survey scales. The 5 scale constructs included transformational leadership readiness, empowerment, general school culture, organizational structure, and organizational culture supportive of teacher leadership (Appendix F). To determine reliability, confirmatory and exploratory factor analyses were conducted. The organizational structure and organizational culture supportive of teacher leadership factors were explicitly stated in the survey section headers, and a confirmatory factor analysis was run. The 3 constructs of transformational leadership readiness, empowerment, and general school culture were not explicitly stated in the survey headings, so an exploratory factor analysis was conducted. All 5 factors consisted of multiple Likert scale composite variables, and Cronbach's Alpha calculations assessed the factors' reliability and internal validity (*Table 9*). Results included the following:

Table 9: Confirmatory & Exploratory Factor Analysis and Cronbach's Alpha

Type of Factor Analysis	Construct / Factor Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Confirmatory	Organizational Structure	α = 0.95
Confirmatory	Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership	α = 0.97
Exploratory	Transformational Leadership Readiness	α = 0.89
Exploratory	Empowerment	α = 0.95
Exploratory	General School Culture	α = 0.54

Four Cronbach Alpha calculations resulted in strong internal consistency (ranging from 0.89 - 0.97), indicating the underlying items measure what they intend to measure and are strongly related to each other. The general school culture factor scale (with 4 items) registered at a lower Cronbach Alpha calculation of 0.54, indicating the possible need for these items to be analyzed separately, as they may not measure the same thing.

Once Cronbach's Alpha calculations determined reliability levels, and to address Research Question #1, correlations for each scale were run using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient. Entering the formal and informal leadership engagement data (rank order of the cumulative counts of multiple activities) as continuous variables, correlations were run with each of the five factor scales. Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the strength of the relationship between each of the five factors and formal and informal leadership engagement.

Survey items included current levels of activity in formal and informal teacher leadership, as these comprised key outcomes for the study. Drawn from conversations between the researcher and EHSD Superintendent, nine categories of informal leadership were pre-identified for survey inclusion, and six categories of formal leadership were pre-identified. For both items, an additional category option of "other" was included. From these categories, participants selected any and all categories reflecting formal and informal leadership in which they were currently engaged, resulting in cumulative counts for both formal and informal leadership engagement.

Qualitative Methodology
Interview, TOY Focus Groups, and Survey Open-Response Development and Implementation

A strength of qualitative field research includes gaining a richer understanding of perspectives, behaviors, attitudes, and subtle nuances ideally explored in their natural setting and within the context of ongoing processes (Babbie, 2017). Qualitative field research allows for greater degrees of flexibility, validity, and confidence that you are measuring what you actually are intending to measure (2017). By probing deeper to understand the *how*, *why*, and *what is really happening here* questions, qualitative inquiry in this study serves to fill in the missing pieces, discern teachers' interpretations of leadership, and unveil conditions influencing engagement.

To develop a meaningful understanding of perspectives about transformational teacher leadership engagement, qualitative approaches included interviews, focus groups, and survey open-responses. Interviews and focus groups were semi-structured, guided inquiries to garner in-depth viewpoints, and the survey open-responses included a "Start-Stop-Keep" framework to draw out teacher perspectives and ideas. Ongoing conversations with EHSD's Superintendent resulted in recruitment outreach through a series of emails, inviting teachers to participate in the quantitative survey as described earlier and to volunteer for a personal interview. Teachers received the Superintendent's invitation email with an attached personal message from the researcher. The email provided a brief study objective, an invitation to complete the anonymous survey, and details about volunteering for a confidential interview with the researcher.

During conversations with the Superintendent about participation possibilities, it was determined to reach out to current and former Teachers of the Year (TOYs) for targeted focus groups. Each campus selects a Teacher of the Year annually, and from these 5 TOYs, a District Teacher of the Year is selected to represent the district at the state level. For this study, all 22 current and former TOYs still teaching in the district were invited to participate in the focus group. Because Teachers of the Year are chosen in recognition for outstanding performance both in and beyond the classroom, they represent an exemplary group to share creative insights into conditions needed to support formal and informal transformational teacher leadership.

The data collection window closed in mid-March, and the analytical process began. Analysis included detailed transcriptions of interviews and focus groups, listening tours, coding analysis, pattern identification, and thematic synthesis among and between data measurements.

Qualitative Data & Analysis

Interview Development and Implementation

An invitation to participate in a confidential interview with the researcher was sent in January to EHSD's 253 district certified teachers. The interview invitation was embedded in the emails from the Superintendent and researcher about the transformational teacher leadership survey. If interested in volunteering for the interview, teachers were requested to contact the researcher directly by email or cell phone to ensure confidentiality and to confirm grade level representation. The initial plan was to randomly select 15 teachers from the list of volunteers (5 each from elementary, middle, and high school). However, because 22 total teachers volunteered to participate in an interview, and not wanting to exclude any teachers' voices, the Superintendent and researcher jointly decided to expand interview participation from the originally-planned 15 to include all 22 volunteers. One of the 22 participants was an administrator (former teacher). The administrator's interview was transcribed and used as a general reference point to inform the study, but the content was not included in the data for coding and/or analysis. This decision ensured alignment with the teacher as the unit of analysis, and more accurately reflected the perspectives of current teachers (as opposed to former teachers who are now administrators). As a small token of appreciation, interview participants received a $10 gift card from the researcher to a restaurant of their choice.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted on- and off-site during a 4-week window with an interview guide of 25 questions (Appendix A). Twenty-two interviews were conducted, representing all 3 school levels (elementary, middle, and high), with 21 in-person and one by telephone. All 21 in-person participants approved audio-recording. The telephone interview was not audio-recorded (due to technological limitations), and detailed hand-written notes were taken during the discussion. Interviews varied by length and scope, and the researcher strove to create an informal atmosphere for participants to feel comfortable to share extemporaneously about ideas, viewpoints, and perspectives regarding teacher leadership engagement. During the interview, the researcher jotted down summary notes to serve as reference points for subsequent analysis. The length of interviews ranged from 24-58 minutes, with the average interview lasting 48 minutes. Interviews were transcribed with Otter.Ai technology, and the detailed effort in ensuring high-integrity transcription accuracy resulted in over 100 hours of transcription clean-up. Approximately 18 hours of interview data was collected, transcribed, analyzed, and coded to identify patterns and themes.

After initially exploring NVIVO and Dedoose qualitative analysis software, the researcher determined the traditional pen-and-paper qualitative analytical processes would be more appropriate for this project in capturing nuance in meanings, terminology, and expressions. Using qualitative coding techniques and Excel spreadsheet matrices, the researcher conducted three listening tours of the audio transcripts. Listening Tour #1 included a review of the audio during the initial upload into the Otter.Ai transcription service; Listening Tour #2 included a more intensive review during the Otter.Ai transcription clean-up process; and Listening Tour #3 included coding and thematic analysis producing 40 initial emergent codes. Subsequent coding and thematic analysis of the initial codes resulted in the emergence of 12 key themes categorized in an Interview Key Themes Matrix (Appendix I & Appendix L). The coding system allowed the researcher to identify the number of times a participant referenced a particular theme or topical

category. Intentionality focused on capturing the essence of what a participant was saying, even if portions of the sentence fit into multiple categories due to usage and context. For example, if a participant responded with a lengthy sentence referencing overlapping thematic categories, the researcher noted the impression in multiple code categories, not just one. In this way, thoroughness was captured in overlapping meanings, topics, and themes that surfaced in a single-question response. Interview Summary Statistics were created to highlight important details of this qualitative measure (Appendix H).

Teacher of the Year Focus Group Development and Implementation

In mid-February, the Superintendent sent an invitation email to all 22 current and former Teachers of the Year (TOYs) currently working in the district, inviting them to participate in focus groups to hear feedback from this exemplary group. Volunteers were asked to contact the researcher directly to coordinate scheduling details. Ultimately, 9 TOYs volunteered to participate, and two separate focus groups were scheduled. A semi-structured discussion style was used with a 10-question guide (Appendix B), and current and former TOYs represented all levels (elementary, middle, and high school). Located in the administration building, the first TOY focus group lasted 48 minutes and included 3 participants, and the second focus group lasted 55 minutes with 6 participants. Upon receiving permission from participants, focus groups were audio-recorded, and the researcher took summary notes during the discussions.

The Otter.Ai audio transcription service was used for the focus groups, and 3 listening tours were conducted to organize, analyze, and synthesize data. Listening Tours #1 and #2 occurred during the uploading process and during the transcription clean-up phase. Using the 40-code framework from the interview data analysis, Listening Tour #3's coding resulted in the identification of 22 emergent focus group themes. In subsequent analysis, synthesized coding and pattern identification resulted in 8 key themes detailed in the TOY Focus Group Key Themes Matrix (Appendix J & Appendix L). As a thank you, the researcher provided pizza for participants. TOY Focus Group Summary Statistics highlight details of this qualitative measure (Appendix H).

Open-Response Survey Development and Implementation

In the 59-question survey sent to all 253 certified district teachers, seven questions provided a qualitative component to the survey instrument. Designed in the "Start-Stop-Keep" framework, open text boxes supplied space for participants to share perspectives not covered by closed-response questions. The "Start-Stop-Keep" items were placed in three different sections in the survey: organizational structure; organizational culture; and the conclusion.

"Start-Stop-Keep" Survey Open-Response Question Style (taken from "Structure" section):

Start	What missing organizational structure(s) would you IMPLEMENT to more effectively facilitate teacher engagement in transformational leadership?
Stop	What current organizational structure(s) would you ELIMINATE to more effectively facilitate teacher engagement in transformational leadership?
Keep	What current organizational structure(s) would you CONTINUE to more effectively facilitate teacher engagement in transformational leadership?

The open-response survey participation rate ranged from 50 responses to 16, illuminating a limitation of the interspersed sections - specifically, survey fatigue. With each open-response

section, participant levels decreased by nearly 50%, from a high 38% response rate (first open-response) to a low 12% response rate (final open-response). Because all three sections were in the last half of the survey (the 3rd being the final question), it is theorized that the location of the items contributed to diminished participation.

Though intentionally divided into different survey sections, the resulting comments did not always neatly fit within assigned categories. Due to this overlap and to establish instrument-to-instrument coding alignment, responses were merged and analyzed in the aggregate using the 40 initial codes that surfaced during interview analysis. Using this systematic process of analysis, 30 of the 40 interview codes surfaced in the survey open-responses. These 30 codes were rank-ordered and ranged from the lowest score of a single reference to the highest score of 29 references. From the coding scores, recurring codes and patterns were identified, and 13 Survey Open-Response Key Themes were drawn out (Appendix K & Appendix L). Additionally, Survey Open-Response Summary Statistics highlight key characteristics (Appendix H).

Findings

Revisiting Research Question 1:

1. **What individual (teacher) and organizational (school and district) conditions influence teacher engagement in transformative leadership (both formal and informal)?**

   a) *What is the relationship between teacher engagement in transformational leadership and organizational structures supportive of teacher leadership?*

   b) *What is the relationship between teacher engagement in transformational leadership and organizational culture supportive of teacher leadership?*

   c) *What is the relationship between teacher engagement in transformational leadership and empowerment?*

   d) *What is the relationship between teacher engagement in transformational leadership and transformational leadership readiness?*

   e) *What is the relationship between teacher engagement in transformational leadership and general school culture?*

Revisiting Research Question 2:

2. **What knowledge, experience, or supports do teachers need to engage in more transformational leadership?**

   a) *What knowledge, experience, or supports most influence teacher engagement?*

   b) *What are the perceptions of Teachers of the Year regarding the knowledge, experience, and supports needed to influence engagement?*

Research Question 1(a-e)

Finding 1 - Teachers that reported organizational culture supportive of teacher leadership engaged in more informal leadership activities. Teachers who reported a readiness for transformational leadership engaged in more formal leadership activities.

Because the survey identified current levels of formal and informal leadership engagement, Spearman's Rank Correlation tests were run to explore the relationship between each of the 5 factor scales (transformational leadership readiness, empowerment, general school culture, organizational structure supportive of teacher leadership, and organizational culture supportive of teacher leadership) and formal/informal leadership engagement.

Transformational Leadership Readiness and Formal Leadership Engagement:

In the Formal Leadership analysis, only the factor of Transformational Leadership Readiness (TFL Readiness) was found to be statistically significant (p-value = 0.04), indicating a positive relationship between transformational leadership readiness and formal leadership engagement (*Table 10*). Though a positive relationship was found, the size of the correlation was minimal, indicating the relationship was not that strong. The TFL Readiness scale included measures of

engagement in formal/informal leadership including mentoring, modeling, professional development, leadership competencies and motivations for involvement and improvement.

Table 10: Formal Leadership and Spearman's Rank Coefficient Correlation

Construct Factor Scale	Spearman's Rho	Significance
Readiness for Transformational Leadership	**0.18**	**p-value = 0.04**
Empowerment	0.08	p-value = 0.35
General School Culture	-0.06	p-value = 0.47
Organizational Structure	0.13	p-value = 0.14
Organizational Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership	0.10	p-value = 0.29

Formal leadership engagement (including grade-level, department-level, building-level, curriculum instructor, teacher mentor and/or committee membership) depends in part on the "distribution of power between the leaders and the followers" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 98). With the connection this study makes between transformational leadership readiness and formal leadership engagement, it indicates teachers involved in formal leadership feel higher levels of motivation for engagement, competency, mentoring, modeling, self-growth, innovation, motivation, and school improvement.

Organizational Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership and Informal Engagement:

In the Informal Leadership analysis, only the factor of Organizational Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership was found to be statistically significant (p-value = 0.007), indicating a positive relationship between organizational culture supporting teacher leadership and informal leadership engagement (*Table 11*). This was a slightly stronger association than the TFL Readiness/Formal Leadership relationship described above. The Organizational Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership scale included measures of customs, habits, practices, norms, networks, and relational activities supporting teacher leadership in the organization. This scale included measures of engagement in collaborative networking, vision-building, knowledge, experiences, empowerment, motivation, innovation, culture-building, support, engagement, meaningful work, individual goal-reaching, and organizational goal-reaching.

Table 11: Informal Leadership and Spearman's Rank Coefficient Correlation

Construct Factor Scale	Spearman's Rho	Significance
Readiness for Transformational Leadership	0.14	p-value = 0.11
Empowerment	0.15	p-value = 0.09
General School Culture	-0.04	p-value = 0.63
Organizational Structure	0.18	p-value = 0.05
Organizational Culture supportive of Teacher Leadership	**0.26**	**p-value = 0.007**

Because culture is infused with shared values, collective identities, and organizational narratives that accumulate over time, it plays a significant role in the development and emergence of and influence over leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Data analysis reveals a strong association between Organizational Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership and Informal Leadership engagement (p-value = 0.007), and it demonstrates a clear connection between culture and a teacher's level of informal engagement. Greater degrees of support in individual and organizational goal-reaching, collaborative networking, vision-building, innovation, meaningful work, and empowerment contribute to higher levels of informal leadership engagement.

Finding #1 reveals the connection between culture and informal leadership, but what are EHSD teachers actually *saying* about culture? In interviews, participants described a wide array of perceptions regarding the current state of the district's culture. When asked about organizational culture that impacts teacher leadership engagement, responses highlighting culture variance emerged. One interview participant shared varying levels of teacher leadership engagement because, "there are different cultures within departments," and another shared, "Culture varies by grade, building, and campus." Ambiguity and conflicting descriptions emerged concerning who, exactly, is responsible for generating culture that impacts leadership engagement. As one teacher offered, "Leadership influences culture," another stated, "Culture is 100% on the shoulders of teachers," and yet another offered, "Culture just happens." While some teachers may have at times been referencing general school culture, the interview was focused on culture that generates transformational teacher leadership engagement. These perceptions underscored the challenge the district faces to strengthen a comprehensive district culture that fosters teacher leadership consistently across campuses. One interview participant reflected, "If there's a district-level culture, I'm not aware of it," and another commented, "There's no defined culture." Several teachers expressed a willingness to accept responsibility to foster positive culture for teacher leadership engagement, as one stated, "Teachers shape culture by their involvement and by attending things," and another commented, "My colleague shapes her own culture" through engagement and participation. Additionally, one teacher noted the connection and interplay between organizational participants to create a leadership culture by stating, "Teachers naturally shape the culture. A lot of the culture we establish on our own, and a lot of that filters down from administration. And the students, they provide a culture, too."

To provide context and communicate the types of formal/informal activities in which teachers are engaged, *Table 12* displays the 53 respondents who selected one or more formal leadership categories (85 cumulative counts of engagement). The top choice in the formal leadership category was "other," indicating the pre-identified categories failed to capture exhaustive options of formal leadership engagement. Similarly, *Table 13* depicts the 67 respondents who selected one or more informal leadership categories (191 cumulative counts). While meaningful work, motivating others, and individual goal-reaching account for the top 3 responses, the category "organizational culture-building" garnered fewer selections. This is an interesting finding due to the positive association reported above between Informal Leadership and Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership. This indicates an opportunity for the organization to build on current culture-building activities and strengthen the existing positive relationship between Culture and Informal Leadership engagement.

Table 12: Formal Leadership by Cumulative Counts of Engagement

Formal Leadership Engagement - Cumulative Counts (N=53)

Category	Count
CURRICULUM INSTRUCTOR	5
BUILDING-LEVEL	7
TEACHER MENTOR	11
DEPARTMENT-LEVEL	12
COMMITTEE MEMBER	15
GRADE-LEVEL	15
OTHER	20
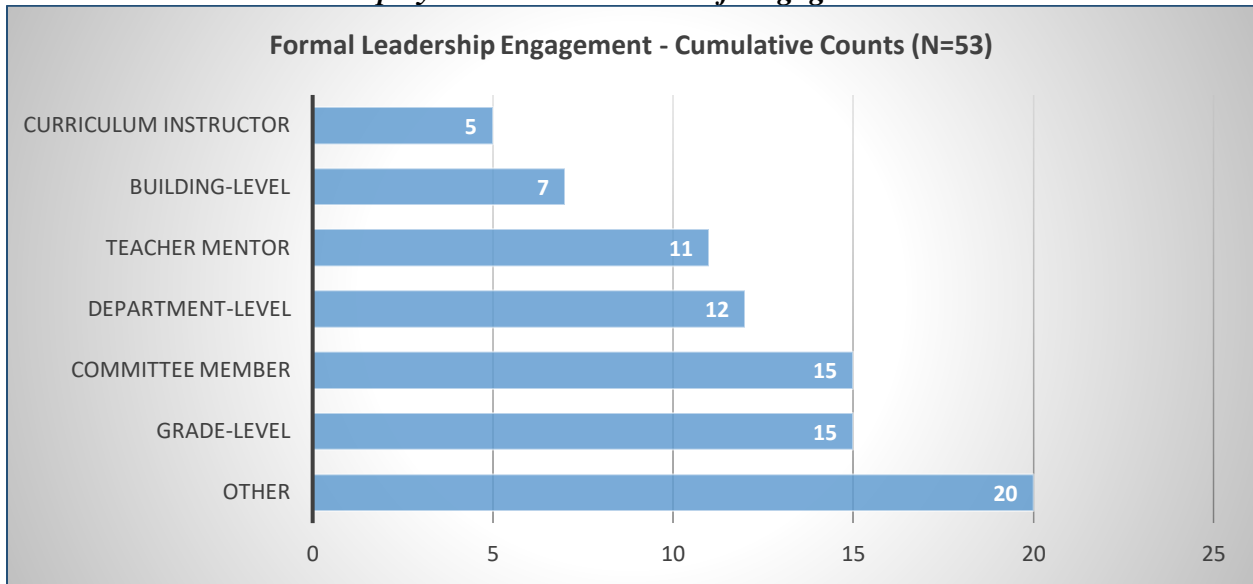
Table 13: Informal Leadership by Cumulative Counts of Engagement

Informal Leadership Engagement Cumulative Counts (N=67)

Category	Count
INNOVATION	8
ORG GOAL-REACHING	8
OTHER	9
VISION-BUILDING	9
ORG CULTURE-BUILDING	10
EMPOWERIG OTHERS	21
COLLABORATIVE NETWORKING	23
INDIVIDUAL GOAL-REACHING	32
MOTIVATING OTHERS	34
MEANINGFUL WORK	37
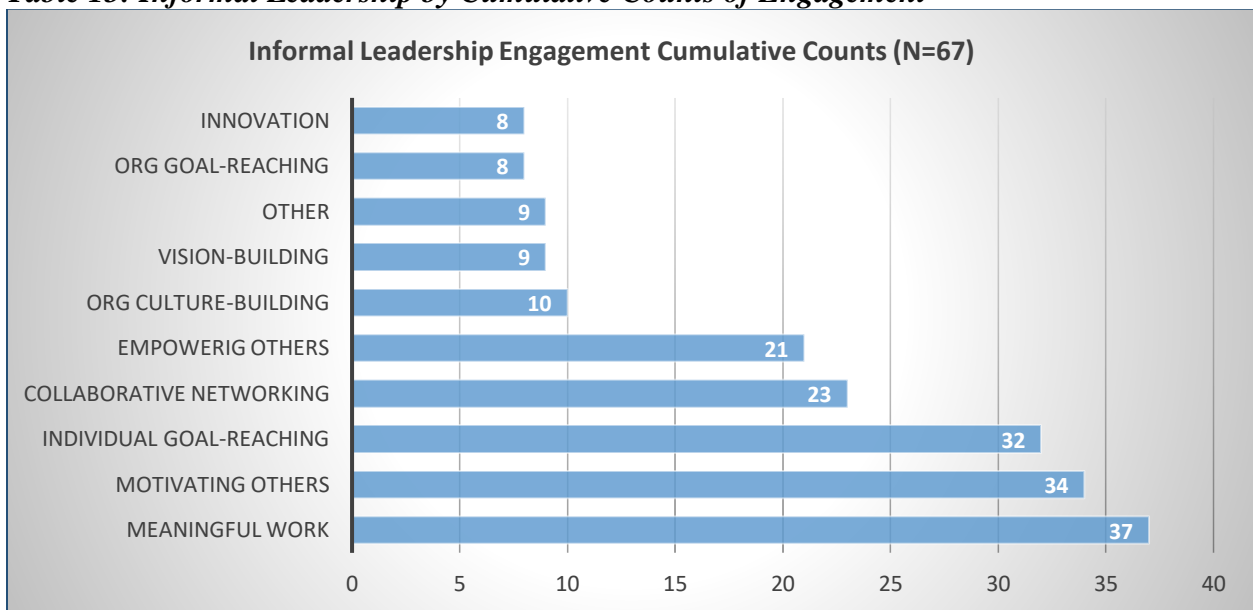
Before assuming non-responding survey participants were not engaged in formal or informal activities, it is important to note these two items were located near the end of the 59-question survey. It is possible some respondents skipped these questions due to survey fatigue.

Finding 2 - Teacher engagement in formal and informal leadership varies by Grade Level and Years Teaching.

To illuminate teacher engagement in Formal/Informal Leadership (using head count), descriptive analyses were conducted with confounding variables of Grade Level and Years Teaching (*Tables 14 & 15*). For each, Fisher's exact test was calculated to determine nonrandom association. Statistical significance was not found for informal engagement with either confounding variable, but statistical significance indicating a nonrandom relationship was found for formal engagement with both Grade Level (p-value = 0.038) and Years Teaching (p-value = 0.003).

Table 14: Formal & Informal Leadership Engagement (Head Count) and Grade Level

Grade Level	Formal Engagement Head Count	Formal Engagement Percentage	Informal Engagement Head Count	Informal Engagement Percentage
Grades PreK-2	7 / 17	41%	9 / 17	53%
Grades 3-5	18 / 25	72%	20 / 25	80%
Grades 6-8	6 / 16	38%	10 / 16	62%
Grades 9-12	15 / 31	48%	20 / 31	65%
Other	7 / 8	88%	7 / 8	88%
TOTAL	53 / 97	55%	66 / 97	68%

Formal p-value = 0.038*
Informal p-value = 0.3

Table 15: Formal & Informal Leadership Engagement (Head Count) and Years Teaching

| Years Teaching	Formal Engagement Count	Formal Engagement Percentage	Informal Engagement Count	Informal Engagement Percentage
1-2 years	0 / 9	0%	5 / 9	56%
3-5 years	4 / 11	36%	4 / 11	36%
6-10 years	7 /11	70%	7 / / 11	70%
11-15 years	9 / 12	75%	10 / 12	83%
16-20 years	7 / 14	50%	9 / 14	64%
21+ years	26 / 42	63%	31 / 42	76%
TOTAL	53 / 99	55%	66 / 99	68%

Formal p-value = 0.003*
Informal p-value = 0.2

The nonrandom relationship between Formal Leadership engagement and Grade Level warrants a deeper look. Teachers in Grades 3-5 and teachers who selected the "other" category represent stronger levels of engagement (the same is true for Informal Leadership, though it could be due to random chance). Interestingly, the "other" category included the highest level of Formal engagement at 88%. This could be due to the "other" category including teachers not bound to one grade level but teach across multiple grade levels, thus encountering more opportunities for Formal engagement. Beyond the "other" category, the high point for Formal Leadership engagement occurs in Grades 3-5, and the low point in Grades 6-8. Notable differences exist between the 5 grade level categories that warrant further exploration in future studies.

When exploring the nonrandom relationship between Formal Leadership engagement and Years Teaching, there is a steady increase of participation levels until "16-20 Years," where a drop-off occurs. Even though cumulative counts of Formal Leadership engagement (*Table 16*) indicate more activity by the most experienced teachers in the final phase of their career, it also indicates

that veteran teachers are carrying a substantial load of leadership responsibilities. Of special note is the complete void of formal leadership by "1-2 Year" teachers who registered 0% engagement (head count and cumulative count) in Formal Leadership.

Table 16: Formal Leadership and Grade Level and Years Teaching (n=85, cumulative counts)
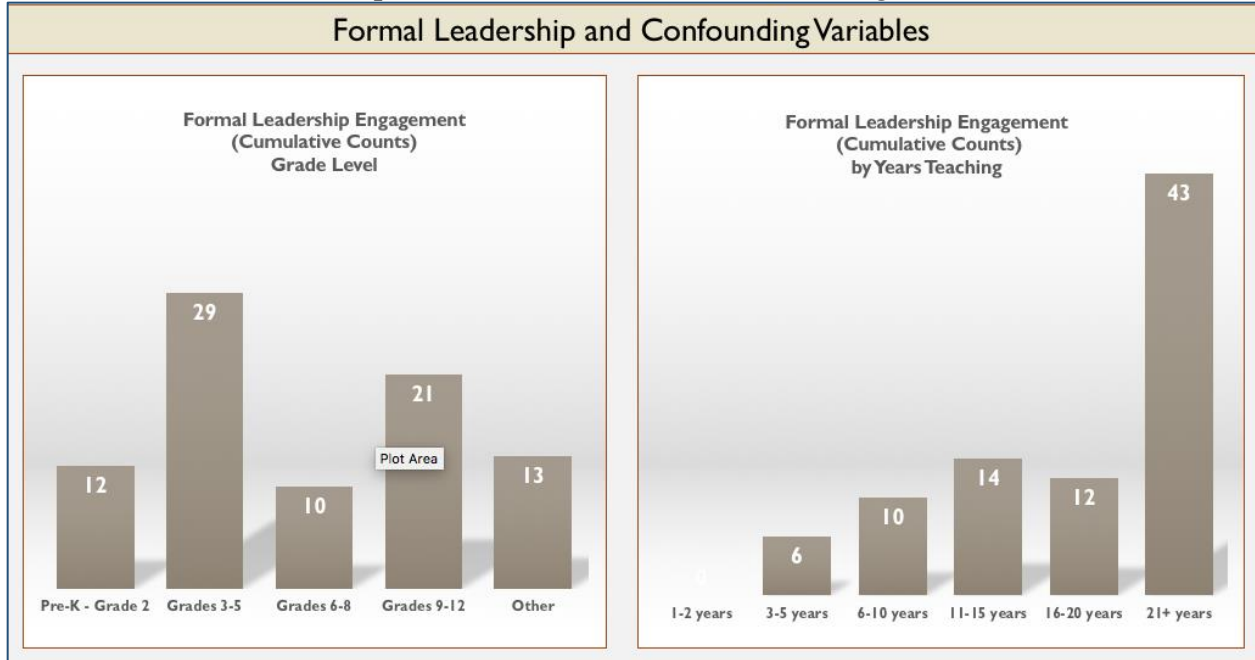
Though not statistically significant and possibly due to random chance, it is interesting to note that nearly half (48%) of all Informal Leadership engagement (cumulative counts) occurs at the high school level (Grades 9-12). Additionally, a strong uptick is observed in Informal Leadership during the final years of teaching (21+ years) with 48% (cumulative counts) of informal engagement occurring (*Table 17*).

Table 17: Informal Leadership and Confounding Variables (n = 191, cumulative counts)
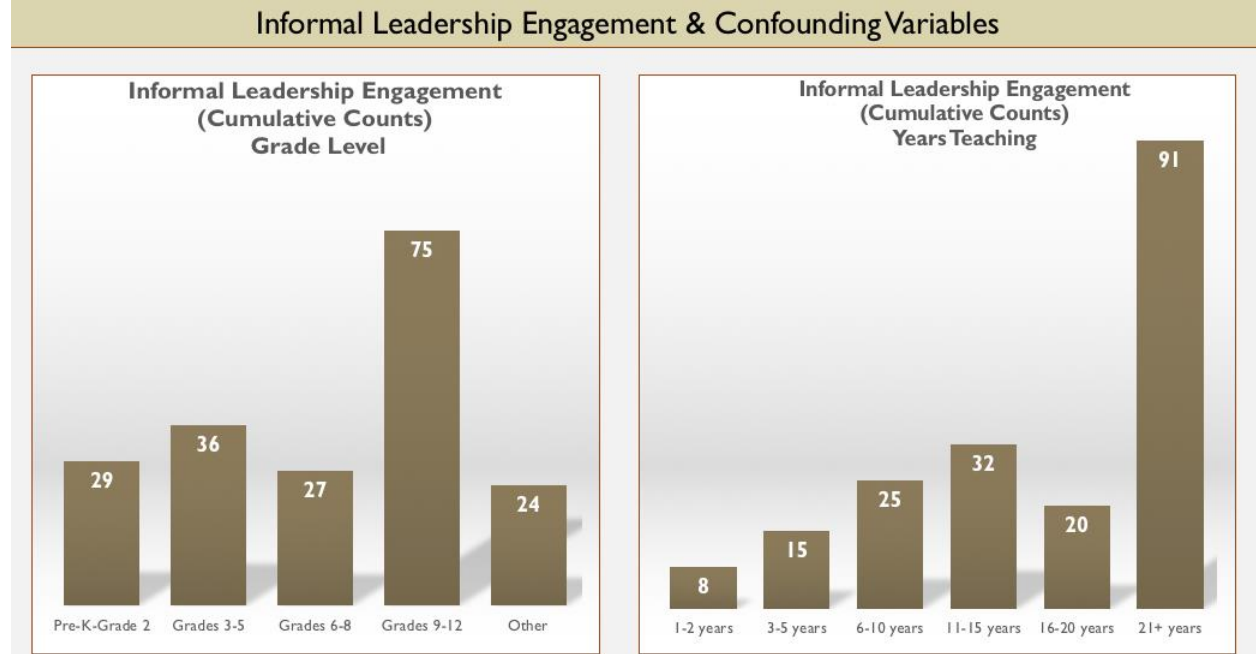
An additional analysis was conducted using the Kruskal-Wallis test to determine the mean, standard deviation, and significant associations between the 5 construct scales and the confounding variables of Grade Level and Years Teaching (*Tables 18 & 19*). No significant relationships were found between the scales and these two variables.

Table 18: The 5 Factor Construct Scales and Grade Level

Characteristic	Grades PreK-2, N = 17[1]	Grades 3-5, N = 25[1]	Grades 6-8, N = 16[1]	Grades 9-12, N = 31[1]	Other, N = 8[1]	p-value[2]
Empowerment	3.95 (0.86)	3.09 (1.08)	3.49 (0.98)	3.59 (1.21)	3.48 (1.09)	0.2
TFL Readiness	3.56 (0.97)	3.96 (0.81)	3.97 (0.79)	3.88 (0.69)	3.19 (1.11)	0.3
General School Culture	4.18 (0.55)	3.98 (0.80)	4.11 (0.71)	4.02 (0.75)	4.25 (0.86)	0.8
Org Structure	3.80 (0.94)	3.10 (1.10)	3.45 (1.11)	3.47 (1.05)	3.53 (1.09)	0.4
Org Culture	3.67 (0.91)	2.80 (1.03)	3.40 (1.04)	3.38 (1.20)	3.53 (1.17)	0.12

[1] Statistics presented: Mean (SD)

[2] Statistical tests performed: Kruskal-Wallis test

Table 19: The 5 Factor Construct Scales and Years Teaching

Characteristic	1-2 years, N = 9[1]	3-5 years, N = 11[1]	6-10 years, N = 10[1]	11-15 years, N = 12[1]	16-20 years, N = 14[1]	21+ years, N = 41[1]	p-value[2]
Empowerment	3.02 (1.26)	3.07 (1.25)	3.24 (0.74)	3.62 (1.32)	3.78 (0.85)	3.65 (1.07)	0.3
TFL Readiness	4.04 (0.58)	3.56 (0.90)	4.27 (0.50)	3.81 (0.89)	3.75 (0.98)	3.72 (0.87)	0.4
General School Culture	3.81 (1.01)	3.82 (0.78)	3.77 (0.71)	4.12 (0.82)	4.16 (0.58)	4.22 (0.65)	0.4
Org Structure	2.90 (1.28)	2.97 (1.21)	3.17 (0.67)	3.56 (1.33)	3.56 (0.85)	3.66 (0.99)	0.2
Org Culture	2.88 (1.34)	2.89 (1.03)	2.91 (0.73)	3.53 (1.24)	3.55 (0.85)	3.44 (1.16)	0.4

[1] Statistics presented: Mean (SD)

[2] Statistical tests performed: Kruskal-Wallis test

System and Process of Leadership:

One of the goals of this study serves to illuminate *processes* and *systems* that produce transformational teacher leadership not just at the top but at all levels. These findings reveal the need for EHSD to more thoroughly understand how culture supportive of teacher leadership and transformational leadership readiness impact (and fail to impact) engagement in formal and informal leadership. As one teacher commented, "How do you make it where it's just like a system that works evenly?" Familiar with culture, policies, and communication on multiple

campuses, the teacher noted inconsistencies between campuses and the challenge regarding teacher awareness of opportunities, empowerment, and pathways for participation.

An implication of Finding 1 suggests a need for EHSD to identify how current culture supports teacher leadership. This finding highlights the need for the organization to approach culture with intentionality. By connecting customs, habits, norms, networks, and relational activities that directly and indirectly impact teacher leadership engagement, the district can adopt system-focused thinking and better understand the role culture plays in teacher leadership. As underscored below, this intentionality can also contribute to a better understanding of how and why variance in the system occurs, and why not all teachers are reporting a similar reality. Though beyond the scope of this study, variance in the system warrants a deeper look. As Bryk et al. (2017) suggest, an important organizational task is to identify who is being failed by the system and to better understand why.
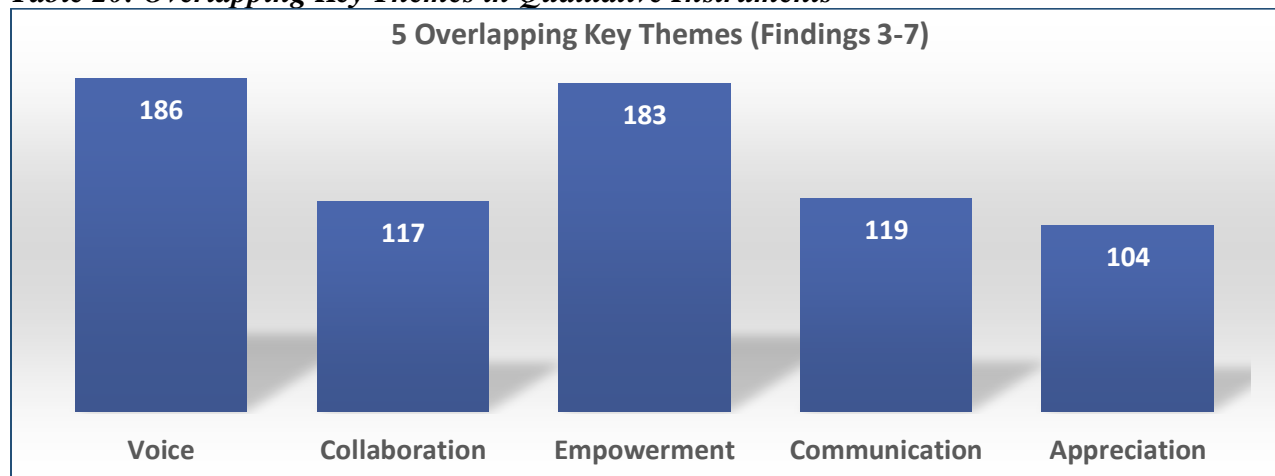
Research Question 2(a)
What knowledge, experience, or supports most influence teacher engagement?
(Addressed in Findings 3-9)

A thematic cross-comparison analysis was conducted to explore which top themes emerged in all 3 qualitative measurement instruments. Results included 5 overlapping key themes: ***teacher voice, empowerment, communication, collaboration, and appreciation*** (*Table 20*). Overlapping sub-themes occurred in two of the three modes: *relationships, engagement, campus-to-campus collaboration, and new teacher mentoring.* Finally, the theme of ***purpose*** emerged as the top theme in the interviews. Each of these conditions are explored in more detail either as a key finding or a sub-finding (in Findings 3-9 below), illuminating the importance of each in the knowledge, experience, and supports needed for transformational teacher leadership engagement.

Table 20: Overlapping Key Themes in Qualitative Instruments

5 Overlapping Key Themes (Findings 3-7)				
186	117	183	119	104
Voice	Collaboration	Empowerment	Communication	Appreciation

Finding 3 - Teachers reported that the key knowledge, experience, and support needed for teacher leadership engagement included **Teacher Voice** at all levels in the district. They emphasized the importance for active Teacher Voice to be invited and included in decision-making, idea-generation, policy-making, feedback, visioning, and campus & district planning.

"I can see my own fingerprint in certain decisions." - Interview Participant

Teacher Voice emerged as the top overlapping theme in all 3 qualitative measures. Teachers desire for administration to *listen*, use teachers' full potential, hear ideas, include many voices, and ask for opinions. This finding was informed both by teachers who feel they have an active Teacher Voice and by those who do not. About the same number of participants reported a sense of strong teacher voice as those who reported a lack of teacher voice. Both groups agreed stronger levels of teacher voice prompt stronger levels of teacher leadership engagement. For example, one teacher felt encouraged in their participation when administration took their idea seriously and reflected, "That was really nice to be heard." On the flip side, another teacher explained their hesitation to engage or speak up because, "I automatically assume that it's just going to get shot down." Teachers reflected on the importance of having the *knowledge* their voice is welcome, the *experience* of contributing ideas, and the *support* from administration to freely voice their opinion.

In interviews, teachers who felt they had active voice shared, "I am a voice for teachers to administration" and *"My duty is to share my opinion."* Teachers expressing a lack of teacher voice articulated frustration their ideas were not valued and a lack of processes to share ideas by saying, "There's not an opportunity to voice your opinion." Disappointed that classroom teachers were eliminated from the school leadership team, teachers in the open-response survey suggested more opportunities for teacher voice on department, campus, and district committees. This was reinforced by an interview participant who wanted the administration to "let us know you want to hear from us and listen to us." Verbalizing the interplay that emerges in a vibrant system of teacher-administration interaction, one interviewee stressed the need for administration to listen to new ideas, but also acknowledged "teachers need to listen to new ideas, too."

Some teachers perceived administrators wanted many active voices involved in decisions. A teacher conceded in an interview, "Teachers get caught up in the mindset that we're victims and don't have a voice. But we do. (We're) not using it." Teachers agreed on the importance for administration to take their ideas seriously, provide an outlet for teacher expression, invite all to participate and act on their ideas. They want to ask questions, push parameters, give advice on policies, and provide input before decisions are made.

Others expressed doubt teacher voice is always welcome, commenting, "There's times you feel they don't want any questions asked." Teachers shared frustration about being asked for input if administration had already made the decision. Some felt teachers had little say and would be shut down, even in small decisions. As one open-response survey respondent wrote, "I felt my opinion was worthless." A similar perception surfaced from new teachers, as expressed in an interview, "As a newbie, I didn't feel like I had anything to say…I felt like you had to have a

couple of years on you before people take you seriously." In the survey, a teacher wrote, "New teachers have no voice, and our ideas aren't viewed as worthy." In an interview, another new teacher added, "(As a novice) what kind of voice do you have in that?" New teachers articulated a wish for a forum to share fresh, new perspectives on structures, policies, and district planning.

Addressing a concern several teachers referenced, one interview participant explained, "Teachers can have active voice in many things without having to leave the classroom. That's the fear…when they go into an administrative supervision, your best teachers leave the classroom." Noting the importance of pathways for formal and informal teacher leadership outside the administrative realm, one interview participant explained, "I never want to leave the classroom."

Teacher ideas included formalizing processes for teacher input, establishing a culture of "trickle-up active voice," expanding leadership teams to include more teachers and not just administrators and facilitators (curriculum instructors providing content support to teachers), hosting a Town Hall, hosting an open forum for discussion, providing platforms (beyond the Professional Learning Communities) for teachers to be heard, including more voices at the decision-making table, and establishing a K-12 Leadership Team and K-12 Leadership Content Team for district planning. As one participant wrote in the survey open-response, "It's the same people doing district decision-making…we need new people."

Research Question 2(b)
What are the perceptions of TOYs regarding the knowledge, experiences, and supports needed to influence engagement?
(Addressed in portions of all remaining findings):

Teacher Voice - TOYs
As the #1 key theme in the Teachers of the Year Focus Group, Teacher Voice included the suggestion for TOYs to foster increased teacher voice for their colleagues. As one TOY articulated, "**TOYs can be a voice for other teachers**." Another Teacher of the Year reflected, "We may be that voice that could say it (to administration). We hear what others have to say, and we might be that voice that could say it without being judged for saying it, because we hear it." By using this group as mediators and advocates for all teachers, teacher voice can be magnified on all campuses. Teachers would know their voice matters, they would gain the experience of actively sharing their ideas, and they would be supported by TOYs in their desire to be heard.

TOY suggestions reflecting the knowledge, experience, and supports needed for teacher leadership engagement included expanding leadership teams, including teachers in programs, creating safe spaces for teachers to share what they think, facilitating better communication, adding more teachers to leadership teams, asking for teacher input, involving teachers in decision-making, and encouraging transparency between teachers and administration. One TOY stated, "I think more teachers would be willing participants of a leadership team…that would give more opportunity for more voices to be heard." Another teacher added, I think it's important for there to be a wider variety of voices (on the leadership team)." Participants suggested incorporating teachers in decision-making at all levels. As one TOY stated, "The majority of decisions made in education don't always come from the teachers, but the teachers are in the trenches, so we know best how to move the needle. We don't always get it right, but we're hands

on." Several TOYs reflected some teachers are afraid to talk to administration or say what they really think, and one TOY acknowledged, "You have knowledge, but you don't want to push it." Another agreed, and added, "I don't want to cause friction." A third offered, "Teaching in isolation, you feel like there's no voice, there's no connection." Finally, the importance of TOY peer-selection was highlighted as an example of active Teacher Voice.

> **Finding 4** - Teachers reported the importance of **Empowerment** as an individual and organizational condition supporting teacher leadership engagement. They emphasized the importance for empowerment through culture, structures, knowledge, experience, and supports that provide avenues for vision-building, autonomy, decision-making, respect, collaboration, motivation, and innovation.
>
> *"When you're supported, there's nothing that can stop you."* - Interview participant

As with Teacher Voice, empowerment represented a similar balance with about the same number of teachers feeling empowered as those who did not. Regardless, both groups agreed empowerment was important to ignite higher levels of teacher leadership engagement. Interestingly, the interviews revealed that teachers could individually feel varying levels of empowerment simultaneously, perhaps feeling empowered in their classroom but not beyond, empowered on their campus but not in the district, or empowered in their ability to teach but not in the school-preferred teaching style. Teachers reporting both high and low levels of empowerment advocated the importance of personally experiencing a sense of empowerment and support by administration to engage in teacher leadership.

Strong Level of Empowerment

For teachers expressing high levels of empowerment, they reported strong administrative support and the power to effect positive impact. As one teacher reflected on empowerment in her interview, she shared, "I have plenty of power...I am not undermined, and administration will go to bat for me 150%." Another teacher added, "I get treated like an equal." One participant revealed a sense of empowerment that they did not have to choose between the classroom and an administrative-level position to have school influence. They shared, "I can be both a leader and a follower" and reinforced the mantra that teachers need not leave the classroom to be leaders on their campus. Teachers indicated these positive effects include seeing things work, not being nit-picked or micro-managed by administration, being needed, sharing knowledge, having people on your side, being taken seriously, mentoring others, being in a positive environment, being allowed to be themselves in the classroom, receiving support from their Professional Learning Community, and making a difference in the lives of others.

Teachers indicated the empowerment of meaningful interaction. As one interview participant stated, "I get to be part of the solution." Another shared, "Teachers come to me a lot." Yet another commented, "When I go to my administration, I am heard." Additionally, empowered teachers conveyed a sense of confidence, content knowledge, and efficacy in teaching. Demonstrating this point, one interview respondent explained, "I believe I could teach every lesson from Kindergarten to AP Calculus," another teacher stated, "I'm good at what I do*,*" and a

new teacher reflected, "I tend to chase after things if I'm confident in it." Illuminating a teacher's literal classroom as a symbol of empowerment, one teacher said, "I feel empowered in my classroom," another shared, "In my classroom, I make the decisions," and yet another commented, "When I go in my room and shut the door, I'm empowered." This is an important distinction for administration, since a teacher's closed door in some cases could infer a sense of isolation. However, these testimonials reveal the opposite…a sense of teacher empowerment.

The statements of empowerment inside the classroom reveal a deeper insight that sometimes the classroom is the **only** place a teacher feels empowered. One teacher shared in an interview, "I've learned to just shut my door and do what I do," and another stated, "I am a leader only in my classroom…I am not a leader anywhere else on campus." Underscoring the need for the organization to identify creative pathways for formal and informal engagement, one survey respondent emphasized "I have a lot of ideas and desire to take on more leadership opportunities, but I feel stuck in my current position."

Weak Level of Empowerment

A lack of empowerment surfaced for teachers who felt there was no point in engaging or their voice was irrelevant in school decisions. When asked to what extent they felt empowered, **one interview participant was silent for 33 seconds before responding**, "I don't feel empowered…I don't." Another interview participant explained, "I feel powerless to make things happen," and another reflected, "I didn't feel like (my participation) really mattered." Expanding on the perception of irrelevance in the grand scheme of things, some teachers expressed a lack of empowerment because administrators clipped their wings. Strikingly, one particular phrase surfaced in all three qualitative measurements from teachers who offered ideas to administration: "I was told to stay in my lane." One teacher touched on this disappointment by stating, "We are turned down a lot of times for our ideas," and another commented, "Administration kills empowerment if they're not in my corner." In cases where teachers feel their suggestions are not appreciated and their opinions do not count, teachers' enthusiasm for leadership engagement is diminished.

Another empowerment inhibitor included a lack of autonomy in teaching methods. One teacher explained feeling limited by the system: "I don't want to be told to teach a certain way." Moreover, in the survey, teachers indicated a lack of empowerment by expressing personal emotions including "I feel oppressed, I (am) working in isolation," and "I feel like I am drowning." Reflecting a similar lack of confidence and hesitation to offer ideas, additional comments included, "I don't want to step on anybody's toes, I don't want to rock the boat, I don't want to overstep my bounds, and I don't want to make waves."

TOYs

Teachers of the Year also expressed high and low levels of empowerment. Even though TOYs are recognized for outstanding excellence in and beyond the classroom, group members acknowledged varying degrees of empowerment on an individual and organizational level.

Strong Level of Empowerment (TOYs)

For some, the fact they were named a Teacher of the Year contributed to a sense of increased empowerment to engage in leadership. One teacher shared, "Being a TOY helps with innovation

and creativity in my professional realm. I initiated helping others when I didn't before. I'm not afraid to ask anymore." Another added, "Being named a TOY was affirmation for what I was doing in the classroom. Personally, it was very rewarding." Others shared how being a TOY led to committee involvement and expanded their scope of thinking. One stated, "Being a TOY made me think about there being another level of education I had never tapped into. (Before being named a TOY), I never thought beyond my discipline…I just kept my head down."

Some TOYs expressed a special sense of empowerment when it came to encouraging new teachers. As one participant shared, "Being a TOY gave me the confidence to go to (new teachers) and say, 'Hey, do you need help?' I'm very comfortable going to a Newbie and saying, 'Here I am, what do you need?' I don't ever mind having a new teacher come watch me teach. I invite them to just come watch."

Weak Level of Empowerment (TOYs)

On the other end of the spectrum, one TOY shared confidence in teaching capacity but felt less empowered to proactively offer advice to fellow teachers. They reflected, "I try to do it and hope that some of the newer, younger teachers might accidentally notice. (I do not do it necessarily as a TOY), but I just try to do what I feel works best with my kids and hope that if it would help someone else, that they would pick it up." This culture of hesitation preventing exemplar teachers from proactively offering help to fellow teachers reveals a missed opportunity to use Teachers of the Year on their campuses and in the district.

Some TOYs felt their professional life was not necessarily impacted by being named a Teacher of the Year. As one participant shared, "Being a TOY did not necessarily impact my capacity to influence beyond my campus. You mind your own business, you keep your head down, you do your work, you don't think anyone is paying attention to you." Another added that it was a challenge to feel empowered "when you've been told to stay in your own lane…it's not conducive for teachers to individually go (to administrators) with problems or concerns," and another reflected on their response to a lack of empowerment and shared, "I close my door."

TOYs offered a suggestion of carrying the TOY distinction over to the following year. Since TOYs are named at the conclusion of an academic year, to many teachers it feels more like an ending rather than a beginning. Thus, the capacity for TOY influence diminishes before the next academic year launches. If opportunities existed for TOYs to carry over the distinction into the following year, increased potential for leadership engagement might exist.

> **Finding 5** - Teachers reported a lack of campus and district-wide communication and advocated the importance of more **Communication** in facilitating increased teacher leadership engagement. It is important for teachers to know, experience, and be supported by impactful channels of communication between teachers and administration, to solve the "I Don't Know" and "I Haven't Been Asked" dilemmas by better understanding system-wide processes leading to teacher engagement, and to learn protocols for either being invited or initiating participation in teacher leadership.
>
> *"If there's no communication, how will they know I want to step up?"* - Interview participant

Strong communication contributes to vibrant information-sharing between teachers and administration and increases teacher awareness of processes and opportunities for leadership engagement. As described by teachers, communication includes two layers: general communication between teachers and administration and specific communication about pathways for teacher leadership. There is a current lack of knowledge regarding participation processes and whether teachers should initiate engagement or wait to be asked.

General Communication

Teachers expressed a desire for stronger communication with administration and for processes to facilitate that communication. One teacher reported in the survey, "There is little correspondence about opportunities for leadership (engagement)." Teachers advocated for more consistent channels of communication, more awareness of faculty, staff, and administrative conversations, more information about campus activities, more campus-to-campus communication, and more opportunities to engage in dialogue between teachers and administration. Teachers explained, "Keep teachers in the loop, and provide more opportunities to share with faculty what is going on at the school." Survey participants shared the difficulty of engaging in transformational teacher leadership "when I don't have a clue what's going on around campus and when there is little to no active communication occurring within my school."

Strengths and limitations exist with current norms of teacher-administration communication. One interview participant stated, "When I go to my administration, I am heard." Another shared a one-way viewpoint of communication by stating, "You only go to administration when you have a problem." Yet another perspective included the intimidation factor of communication between teachers and administration by acknowledging, "It's scary to go to the top with an idea."

Suggestions addressing the general communication problem included having more face-to-face meetings (with the caveat the meetings are meaningful, informative, and impactful), providing advance communication, supplying observation feedback directly to teachers, and implementing consistent communication policy. Interview participants offered suggestions as simple as, "Listen…respect our ideas," and "Sit with us and brainstorm," to "Have a pow-wow with teachers and talk…share ideas," and "Keep teachers in the loop and give us a heads-up." One interviewee mentioned the data collected from school surveys and said, "We don't know what happens to it. It leaves the impression that nothing is happening to it. Where does the data go?" These reflections underscore the importance of a consistent communication system that equips teachers with the knowledge, experience, and support they need to engage in teacher leadership.

Specific Communication - The "I Don't Know" & "I Haven't Been Asked" Dilemmas

The I Don't Know Dilemma

The second element of Finding #5 unveils an unanticipated 2-sided theme voiced by teachers when asked about knowledge, experience, and supports needed for teacher leadership engagement. One side of the coin includes the "I Don't Know" dilemma in which teachers are unaware of opportunities, engagement processes, or communication about participation. In the interviews, 15 of the 21 (71%) participants reported a lack of knowledge about *how* to engage. One interviewee shared, "I have no idea…I don't know the selection process," and another

added, "I have a lot of great ideas, and a lot of great things I want to do, but it's hard to figure out what to do and how." Ambiguity about participation pathways and outright "I don't know's" surfaced about the actual processes for leadership engagement. When asked about informal leadership, one interview participant replied, "The process for informal leadership…I don't think there is one…I'm not aware of it, or I would probably be interested." Teachers connected this lack of awareness to a lack of campus and district-wide communication. As a teacher stated in an interview, *"I* don't know that I know it's out there…I don't know that it's happening," and another reflected, "If you're not on the leadership team, you don't know what the leadership team is doing." Lack of communication about processes contributes to diminished teacher leadership, and the organization can work to strengthen these information channels.

The I Haven't Been Asked Dilemma

The second side of the coin involves whether teachers initiate engagement or hold back until invited. Notably, 19 of the 21 (90%) interviewees indicated they were either currently engaged in leadership activities *because they were asked or invited*, or they were not currently engaged in leadership activities *because they were not asked or invited*. This revealed a number of teachers who perceived the organizational culture to be one of "waiting to be asked" instead of volunteering or initiating engagement. One interviewee captured the essence of the ambiguity by reflecting, "I wait to be asked…I wait to be invited…do I need to initiate?" Regarding opportunities for teacher leadership, another interviewee said, "Maybe the invites go to other people…maybe I'm not one of those people on that list." Another clarified their perception of the process by saying, "I'm not the first one that gets asked…that's just not how it is."

In the absence of clear communication about the process, some teachers fill in the blank. A survey respondent wrote, "The administration pre-selects." An interviewee described, "I know they ask people to serve on committees from time to time, but it's not real often," and another stated, "If you're not invited to the leadership meetings, you don't really have a lot of avenues (for engagement)." A teacher offered, "I would volunteer, but administration selects…they pick you." Yet another acknowledged, "Leadership…I would do it…if I was asked." Currently, a lack of communication is contributing to confusion about participation processes and to an unspoken culture of waiting to be asked. Similar to Fining 4 where TOYs hesitated to offer advice to fellow teachers, this **Hesitation Culture** indicates teachers across the board do not feel as comfortable volunteering or initiating leadership engagement. This Culture of Hesitation underscores the importance of creating avenues for teachers to volunteer and initiate leadership engagement, instead of a system where teachers must wait to be invited or asked.

TOYs - Communication

Teachers of the Year advocated a stronger system of campus-to-campus communication to advance teacher leadership district-wide. They offered to serve as advocates and mediators between teachers and administration. One teacher shared, "TOYs could lead communication between campuses," and another explained, "TOYs are not afraid to go to administration…some people are afraid to go to administration and say what they think." One Teacher of the Year mentioned it would be nice for teachers to have an opportunity to sit down with administration and communicate directly. They acknowledged a hesitation to communicate personally out of fear it might create distance between teachers and administrators. As one TOY explained, "You

don't want to create a wall or fence between you and administration. The climate doesn't give itself to 'Come on in and tell us...' It's not like that…but it would be nice if we could just go (to administration) and say what's happening…but would it be held against me, because I said it? Who wants to rock the boat like that? We just hope someone will see and say, 'Oh, that's a good idea.' We just hope they'll come and ask - that's safer." One TOY believed more direct communication would benefit administrators as well as teachers, because administration may not be aware of issues or know what teachers are thinking. The participant shared, "They can't fix what they don't know, and they may have no idea what is being said."

> **Finding 6** - Teachers reported the need for expanded **Collaboration** with colleagues in and across their campus and district to facilitate teacher leadership engagement. Collaboration includes 3 components to expand knowledge, experience, and supports for teacher leadership: collegial collaboration, vertical alignment, and campus-to-campus interaction.
>
> *"We don't get a chance to collaborate as a whole district at all, and I wish that could be different."*
> - Focus Group participant

Collegial Collaboration

The 1st component of collaboration includes a teacher's level of interaction and connectivity with fellow teachers, increased collegial collaboration, and structures to support collaborative interactions. Teachers indicated collaboration would heighten leadership engagement through bonds and attachments to others across the organization. One interviewee explained, "I am curious to know other teachers' approaches." A survey respondent wrote, "I want time to connect, collaborate, and create." Other respondents supported collaborative efforts to alleviate isolation and to cultivate "meaningful relationships that build positive culture." Teachers expressed the desire to meet colleagues, collaborate with peer observations, interact with others in and beyond their content area, and, as one survey respondent expressed, "incorporate more and new people (instead of) the same people over and over again." One interview participant conveyed the desire to collaborate by stating, "There's a lot of people here, and I don't get to visit with them because of the daily design…they probably have a lot of innovative ideas."

Survey open response suggestions to establish a collaborative culture included team-building activities, Buddy Teachers, mentorships, and a Leadership Team with not only administration and department leaders, but also teachers and staff. Additional suggestions included keeping the popular district-wide meeting, the common planning periods, and the professional learning communities (PLCs) that spark meaningful collaboration among teachers.

Vertical Alignment Collaboration

The 2nd component of collaboration includes K-12 vertical alignment. Although teachers mentioned both horizontal and vertical alignment as a mechanism for teacher leadership, 81% of the alignment comments focused on K-12 vertical alignment. Teachers want vertical alignment to strengthen curriculum and content knowledge (grades above and grades below), develop collaborative conversations across grade-levels and campuses, create consistency campus-to-

campus, formalize academic coordination, build stronger relationships, and align policies district-wide. A survey respondent wrote, "We need meetings structured around the continuum of grade levels" and another suggested "a district-wide focus on best practices." Other survey respondents advocated vertical alignment to provide consistency in teaching methods across grade levels and to better understand content taught in different grades. When discussing vertical alignment, one interviewee shared, "I'm interested in what (other teachers) have to say…our job is to be better, and our job is to understand what's going on in other classes." A survey respondent suggested leaders were needed at all levels in all content areas, and another suggested a K-12 volunteer committee for district improvement and vertical alignment.

Campus-to-Campus Collaboration

A 3rd component of collaboration includes campus-to-campus collaboration. Teachers desire more interaction between campuses in the district. They connect this idea with increased teacher leadership as additional spaces for engagement might emerge through collaborative initiatives. One interview participant shared, "I've never had a K-12 conversation," and another stated, "Every building is an island." Though a full district-wide meeting is a rare occurrence, it is strikingly popular among teachers, and they appreciate the opportunity to collaborate across campuses and participate in district-wide conversations. An interviewee said, "(The district meeting) is fun…you see people you won't see the rest of the year," and a survey respondent commented, "I like getting to see and interact with people from other campuses."

TOYs - Collegial Collaboration

Teachers of the Year expressed collaboration as an important driver for teacher leadership engagement. Although one TOY reported a high level of collaboration with a department that meets almost daily, another TOY shared, "There are some days I don't even see an adult." Another TOY highlighted the importance of collegial collaboration and peer networking and commented, "I love going to sit in another teacher's classroom." When asked if they ever met as a group, TOYs explained they had not previously met together but were interested in the idea of future collaboration. One TOY acknowledged the challenge for teachers who were a Department of One without opportunities for collaboration. This TOY acknowledged "some teachers felt they were teaching in isolation," and another TOY added, "I always felt like I was on an island. Where do I go when I don't know? Who do I bounce ideas off of?"

An important characteristic of collaboration mentioned by TOYs focused on new teachers and new teacher mentoring. As one TOY stated, "We have had a lot of new teachers - if we just had a faculty meeting and asked them, 'What are you struggling with? What do you need help with?' Then we could improve current mentoring programs." TOYs advocated collaborative partnerships to prompt leadership engagement by pairing new teachers with veteran teachers and designing a system for new teachers to observe and work with veteran teachers. TOYs also expressed willingness to lead by mentoring new teachers. TOYs suggested collaborative opportunities for teachers to talk together without administration present, and to have mobility between classrooms to observe other teachers. An idea included Leadership Teams with cross-disciplines represented to facilitate networking across grade levels and content areas.

TOYs - Vertical Alignment Collaboration

Teachers of the Year advocated "bringing other grades into the fold" by maximizing vertical alignment for collaborative teacher leadership across grade levels. By fostering content-related conversations, teachers would have opportunities to participate in discussions to strengthen collaboration. One TOY shared, "(It's important to) get all the voices on board…what are you seeing in K-2 or K-3 that might help somebody with Grades 4-5, so by the time (the students) get there, (teachers know) this is where instruction left off, and this is where we will pick it up."

TOYs - Campus-to-Campus Collaboration

TOYs discussed collaboration and the need to think expansively (beyond my classroom and beyond my campus). As one TOY shared, "We don't ever meet with other campuses." When discussing the need for more campus-to-campus collaboration, one TOY reflected, "Each campus is its own island…all of us get to see each other opening day in August, and then, we're off, it's done, we don't see them, we just don't. We don't get a chance to collaborate as a whole district at all, and I wish that could be different. Like a PD day where we can all be together. But we don't. It does feel separate." One TOY advocated for campuses to think like a unified district and eliminate a perceived sense of campus rivalry. They said, "It's almost like a competition from campus to campus." Another added, "There's a lack of wanting to work together. Each school is seen as a separate school, but we should all be working together." Teachers felt working together and sharing experiences across campuses would expand opportunities for teacher leadership. TOYs suggested a district-wide Roundtable to hear ideas from all campuses and for TOYs to serve as facilitators for campus-to-campus collaboration.

> **Finding 7** - Teachers reported a key support needed for teacher leadership included a stronger culture of **Appreciation**. Emphasizing how *little things* can make a significant difference in capacity for leadership engagement, teachers expressed a need to work and thrive in a culture of appreciation, value, affirmation, encouragement, and acknowledgment for their contributions, expertise, skills, and ideas.
>
> "A lack of appreciation wears on you. I don't know if anybody cares. I do all this stuff…but I don't know if anybody notices." - Interview participant

Appreciation is connected to teacher leadership because, as one teacher phrased it, "when you feel better, you teach better." A survey respondent captured the importance for organizational culture to be infused with authentic appreciation by sharing "Only once in my years have I been complimented by a building-level administrator." Respondents' perspectives revealed a lack of motivation for engagement when they wrote they felt "discouraged," "lost," and "some days…defeated." An interviewee shared, "It's just little things that change how somebody feels…being appreciated changes the whole culture of things." One interview participant talked about how she tried to always encourage other teachers, noting the importance for colleagues to show appreciation for each other. Another teacher connected their current engagement efforts to a demoralizing lack of acknowledgement from others and said, "I really wish people would say

they appreciate what I'm doing, or they would thank me." As a reminder that little things can make a significant difference, one teacher stated, "It doesn't take much to please us teachers."

On the positive side (which was articulated less frequently with this topic), teachers emphasized the impact that acknowledgment from administration has on teacher leadership engagement. One teacher shared, "Administration point black said (to me), 'You cannot imagine how much I appreciate you doing this.'" That teacher felt validated and respected by their administrator, and that simple but powerful statement of appreciation impacted their motivation to engage and go the extra mile. Another interviewee explained, "It makes me feel like I'm doing my job well, when I go to (administration) with a concern, and it's acknowledged and addressed." Teachers who felt appreciation from administration and fellow colleagues agreed, "It's the little things" that make the difference in wanting to exert extra effort in leadership engagement.

TOYs - Appreciation

TOYs expressed a need to feel a sense of appreciation in the organization as they also occasionally struggle with a sense of defeat, isolation, or lack of connection. As several TOYs explained, "We're in the grind. We're in the trenches every day. Teachers need affirmation and kindness. We want to come to work when we feel good at work…leadership has a great influence on the morale and climate for the whole setting." Being named a TOY contributed to individual teachers' sense of being appreciated, and one commented, "I felt affirmed that my work was worthwhile, and the effort was being recognized, and that I was growing professionally." TOYs voiced the role they can play in bringing a positive culture to campus and encouraging fellow teachers in their leadership engagement. One TOY shared the importance of hearing words of appreciation to validate the impact of their leadership, especially when "I lose focus of the impact I'm making…and others saw that in me that I really didn't see at the time."

> **Finding 8**: Teachers reported a key knowledge, experience, and support for teacher leadership included a sense of **Purpose** (the "why") on two levels: *organizational* - school vision, policies, programs, decisions, and opportunities; and *individual* - personal vision, motivation, and meaningfulness. When these connections are clear and when teachers see the impact of their efforts, stronger alignment exists between opportunities and motivations for teacher leadership engagement. Moreover, teachers reported a key motivating factor for leadership engagement included improving school conditions.
>
> *"I don't mind doing anything as long as I know there's a purpose in it."* - Interview participant
>
> *"I struggle with wanting to engage…if I know I can't have an effect."* - Interview participant
>
> *"I have to have an end to my start."* - Interview participant

Purpose - Organizational

Emerging as the #1 key interview theme for motivating teacher leadership engagement, teachers desire for administration to communicate the *why* behind decisions, protocols, policies, and

opportunities. Teachers voiced the need to know the purpose for organizational participation, reasons for specific actions, and rationale for directives. As one interviewee said, "I'm a Why Guy," and another stated, "People will support it if they understand why." An experienced teacher who was new to the district mentioned, "At my previous school, I understood the 'why' behind the policies…I knew where we were headed."

Teachers explained they will engage if they know the purpose, connect it to impact, and see improvement. An interviewee said they would get involved "if they knew participating or leading in one of the groups would actually change things." The implication is that teachers are pushed away from leadership engagement because they don't know or understand the purpose for the effort and don't connect it to real change or school improvement. Comments included, *"Why get involved if it doesn't matter?," "Why are we doing this?,"* and "There's no point." Committees, teams, and meetings should have a clearly stated purpose to motivate participation. As one teacher suggested, always ask, "What is the purpose for the committee? The purpose for this meeting? The purpose for this conversation?" Committees and engagement activities should arise when there is a well-articulated need, goals are stated, and the focus is school improvement.

The *why* is crucial. Teachers need to know the purpose behind administrative decisions. As one teacher stated, "Explain the no's." Teachers need to know why their involvement matters, and to see the impact of their participation. Understanding the reasons for decisions and seeing the impact motivates teacher leadership engagement. A cautionary reminder was articulated by one interview participant when they stated, "Without the why, people fill in the blanks."

Purpose - Individual

Teachers shared the need for connections between individual purpose and teacher leadership engagement. When asked about motivation for teacher leadership, interviewees currently engaged in leadership responded, "I think I can still help people," and "When I see a need, I am there." One teacher affirmed the role their daily work played in the big picture by stating, "My piece is important." Another reflected on their current engagement by sharing, "I want to make a difference," and another commented, "I believe what I'm doing matters." One teacher explained their rationale for engagement by asking, "What if I could have been a better teacher…or I could have been a better leader…or I could have been a better something?" One teacher attached purpose to engagement by explaining, "I have to have an end to my start." Teachers need to believe their participation makes a difference. This sentiment was underscored by an interviewee who shared, "I struggle with wanting to engage…if I know I can't have an effect." The knowledge that a teacher's participation makes a genuine impact is a key motivator.

Some teachers connect purpose and engagement by their impact on students. This commitment illuminates one of the focuses for this study by highlighting non-administrative leadership opportunities for teachers. As one teacher mused, "Why do I have to leave the classroom to be a leader?" Teachers believe they can remain in the classroom and still have a school-wide impact through leadership engagement. Teachers' commitment to students surfaced as a motivating factor for engagement: one teacher said, "I'm the voice for that child." These teachers viewed engagement as a way to improve teaching and impact students' lives. One teacher reflected, "There's very, very, very little that I won't do to benefit these kids," and another affirmed, "(The students) make you feel like you matter, that you're making a difference."

Purpose: Improving Current Conditions at my School

Although the theme of improving school conditions did not specifically surface in the qualitative measurements as a driver for engagement, this finding compellingly emerged in the quantitative survey data through a 4-question set. When asked *To what extent will the following factors motivate you to engage in leadership activities?* The response *I would take on a leadership position to improve the current conditions at my school* emerged as the top choice with 82% of respondents selecting *somewhat* or *a great extent* (*Table 21*). This response eclipsed the 3 alternative options of *additional compensation, recognition by my peers and administrators*, and *professional growth and stimulation*. This finding underscores the importance to clearly articulate the ***why*** behind school vision, policies, and actions as well as the ***impact*** of individual teacher leadership in driving school improvement. The implication is that when teachers see their participation as a positive force for school improvement, they are more motivated to engage.

Table 21: Improving Current Conditions at my School
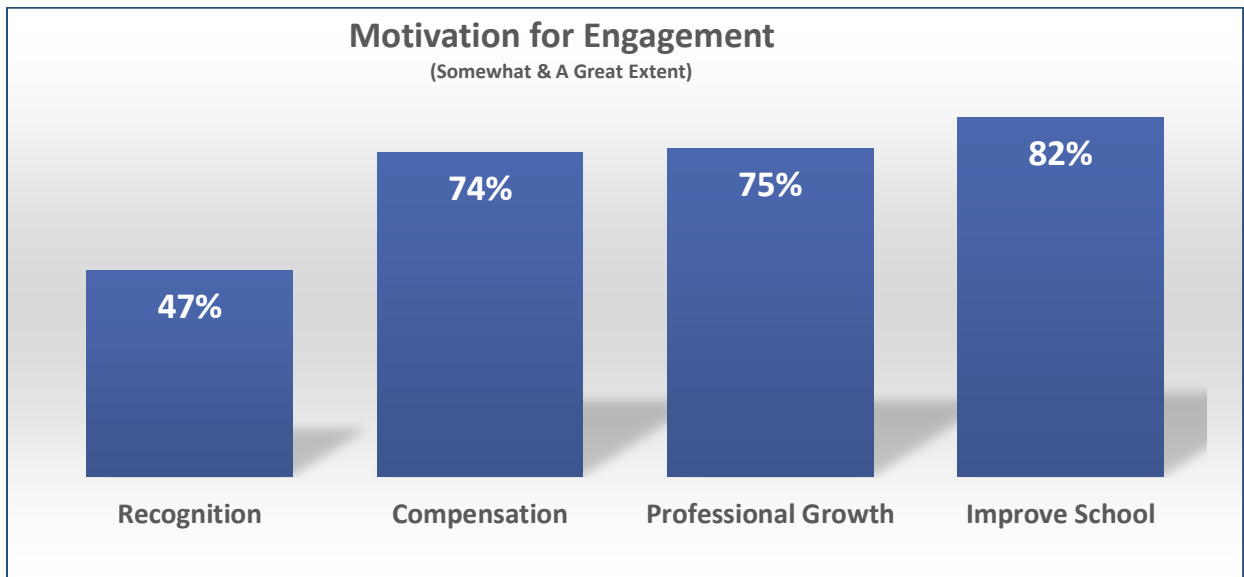
Motivation for Engagement
(Somewhat & A Great Extent)

Recognition	Compensation	Professional Growth	Improve School
47%	74%	75%	82%

Finding 9: Teachers reported the need to strengthen **Relationship-Building** opportunities in the district to increase teacher leadership engagement trough meaningful friendships, impactful networks, and a sense of bonding to others and to the organization. Teachers reporting both strong and weak levels of relationships stressed the importance of the district prioritizing connections among fellow teachers, administration, and students to nurture teacher leadership engagement.

"I didn't feel like I knew anyone." - Focus Group participant

Relationships with Teachers

Strong

Relationship-building's triple-dimension of teacher/administration/student provides an opportunity for EHSD to focus on culture supporting this organizational focus. Strong teacher relationships provides meaningfulness and connectivity to each other and to the organization. As one interviewee described daily interaction, engagement, and creative activities with colleagues, she exclaimed, "I really love these people - you become like family!" She went on to describe how teachers invent their own engagement activities and provide consistent support to one another - everything from covering a fellow teacher's class to supplying a chocolate candy bar and a soda if a colleague was having a particularly challenging day. She reflected, "Now that's a family…that's a family." Teachers reporting strong relationship levels with colleagues emphasized the joy and meaningfulness those friendships bring to daily activities and teacher leadership interaction. One teacher remarked, "My teacher group, they're amazing…they've got your back, they share resources, boost you up, and encourage you."

Weak

However, many teachers articulated a lack of opportunities to foster meaningful relationships with colleagues in the district. One teacher reflected, "When asked if I know someone, I say, 'I don't know anybody.'" An interviewee stated, "If relationships happen, they happen on their own, outside the school setting." Another teacher said, "We need more camaraderie," and another articulated a willingness to serve on a committee so they would "have an opportunity to meet with people from all over the district." One interview participant explained, "If they don't work on my campus, I don't know them," and another commented, "I can go weeks without talking to an adult…I really don't see anyone." Additional comments reflected a sense of isolation and lack of connectivity, including, "It's hard to know people, Some (teachers) feel isolated, I don't know anyone," and "Sometimes you feel like you're alone." Implications include the impact of strong relationships in fostering teacher participation and engagement.

Teachers with both strong and weak relationships expressed the need for more social opportunities to meet people in the district. Though some teachers perceived their lack of old-time community connections as a possible reason for not knowing anyone, even teachers originally from the area expressed a lack of relationship and commented how few people they actually knew. One teacher marveled that a relative worked in the district, and she didn't even know it until they both discovered they worked at the same place while at a family reunion.

A particularly popular and fun event is the district meeting at the beginning of the school year. One interview participant explained, "I don't know most of who works on other campuses. The only time we have a full district meeting is the first week. That's a day I enjoy because I get to see who all actually works here." Many teachers extolled this day for their ability to get to sit with other teachers, build camaraderie, and see people they don't see the rest of the year. As one teacher noted, "The district meeting…now that's a day I enjoy!" Noting variance in teachers' experiences at the district meeting, some teachers said they sit with their own group, others sit with friends and don't meet anyone new, and one recalled sitting alone and didn't know anyone.

Relationships with Administration

Teachers highlighted the importance of trust, approachability, caring, and openness with administrators. Some teachers perceived administrators to be open and approachable, others felt administrators should make a stronger effort to establish rapport with teachers and build connections for teacher leadership engagement.

Strong

Some teachers articulated a strong relationship with administrators and indicated a positive impact on teacher leadership engagement. One teacher noted their motivation for engagement by stating, "They treat me as an equal," and another stated, "Administration comes to me (to discuss ideas)." One teacher felt that open-door policies were particularly useful for facilitating teacher leadership, as teachers could take ideas directly to administrators for consideration. Other teachers describing positive relationships with administration appreciated their openness, visibility, and approachability to foster meaningful interactions and that they listen to ideas and concerns. One participant said, "When I go to my administration, I am heard," and another expounded, "Administration is approachable and easy to talk to." Another respondent reflected, "Administration gives good, solid support," and another appreciated direct communication access and stated, "They've never not responded to an email or text message."

Weak

Reflecting the sentiment that administrators should try harder to relate to teachers and build bridges for teacher leadership, one teacher said, "Some teachers might be frightened, sometimes, to say anything to them, (they) don't feel like they're personal for you to talk to." Perceptions included sensing high/low levels of trust between teachers and administrators and sensing whether administrators wanted to get to know teachers. As one teacher reflected, "I don't feel it's really desired that we have a good relationship. I don't think it's an 'I want to get to you know you' thing." A strong teacher-administrator relationship is key for teacher leadership engagement, especially, as one teacher put it, "when a teacher raises their hand to give an idea." Another teacher expressed the hope to have a more personal relationship with administrators and commented, "Know who we are. Know our first names." Echoing the sentiment of a lack of district-wide relationships, one teacher said, "If you ask me who's the principal, literally, at the building next door, I have no idea, because I've never seen that person before."

Relationships with Students

A third layer of the Relationship-Building theme included teachers' relationships with students, and the importance of that relationship as a motivator for teacher leadership engagement. When teachers believe engaging in leadership contributes to their students' success and strengthens the student-teacher relationship, teachers are more willing to participate. As one teacher noted, "I'm going to build that relationship (with students)…they know it's a safe place and that I love them." Teacher-student relationships provide a sense of motivation for teacher leadership engagement. One teacher described their interaction with students by stating, "I am a friend to students. I pay attention. I am a mentor." Using their own personal levels of engagement as an example to students, several teachers mentioned the goal of helping their students be more than just good students, but also good humans, citizens, future employees, and community members.

TOYs - Relationships

Relationship-Building was the 4th most prevalent theme emerging from the TOY Focus Groups. Although it might be assumed a Teacher of the Year would report strong levels of relationships, a number of TOYs mentioned the need for the organization to focus on helping teachers develop relationships to drive teacher leadership engagement across the district. As one TOY stated, "I didn't feel like I knew anyone." Another participant explained the feeling of disconnection by stating, "We're together but separate." TOYs expressed the desire to interact more with other teachers, fostering leadership engagement both in their grade-level and across campuses in the district. One teacher commented, "I wish we could have a little bit more relationship with other campuses…you don't ever see others…you don't have an opportunity." They also mentioned the desire to get to know their fellow Teachers of the Year. One teacher suggested additional emphasis to be placed on relationship-building and collective engagement, and commented, "I only know the other TOYs on my same campus - I don't know the other TOYs." Ultimately, relationships build community, and community fosters a strong and supporting culture for teacher leadership engagement not only for Teachers of the Year but for all teachers.

Key Takeaways

> **Key Takeaway #1** - **Teachers of the Year** offer an untapped wellspring of potential. Generally expressing increased levels of empowerment for teacher leadership, they can be more fully used to serve as a voice for fellow teachers, mentor new teachers, serve as model teachers for observation, and function as leadership magnets to draw others into teacher leadership engagement.

In the two combined Teacher of the Year focus groups, themes surfaced indicating high levels of willingness to engage and contribute as a TOY. Though not currently activated as a collective group, this company of outstanding teachers offers untapped potential to be a voice for all teachers, collaborate across campuses, mentor new teachers, build relationships, and encourage teacher leadership engagement in the district. An opportunity exists for TOYs to formalize their involvement and engage as a collective presence in the district. The National Network of State Teachers of the Year promotes the involvement of TOYs to "transform the teaching profession" by incorporating the voices of TOYs in multiple capacities, including teacher leadership and culture-building (NNSTOY, 2020). By harnessing currently under-used expertise, skill, and talent of campus and district TOYs to serve as a voice for fellow teachers, facilitate campus connections, mentor new teachers, foster relationships, and empower culture-building, EHSD stands to gain a tremendous asset through this collective society of teachers.

> **Key Takeaway #2** - Widespread **variation** exists regarding teachers' lived realities and experiences with cultural and structural conditions contributing to teacher leadership engagement. While some teachers report strong connections with leadership-fostering organizational conditions, other teachers report weak connections, resulting in variance across the district.

In the interviews, focus groups, and survey responses, teachers reported notable variation in their perceptions and lived experiences with a number of organizational conditions contributing to teacher leadership engagement. Teachers shared both high and low levels of empowerment, teacher voice, purpose, and relationships. Findings highlight the importance of system-wide consistency in vision, policy, communication, and opportunities to cultivate a stronger district-wide environment for teacher leadership. Findings reveal the need to build on current culture with intentionality to support teacher leadership engagement. By connecting customs, habits, norms, networks, and relational activities directly and indirectly impacting teacher leadership engagement, EHSD can adopt system-focused thinking and better understand the role culture plays in driving teacher leadership. This intentionality can also contribute to a better understanding of how and why variance in the system occurs, and why not all teachers are reporting a similar reality. *Though beyond the scope of this study*, variance in the system warrants a deeper look. As Bryk et al. (2017) suggest, an important organizational task is to identify who is being failed by the system and to better understand why.

> **Key Takeaway #3** - **Organizational Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership** is a key driver for increased transformational teacher leadership engagement. Prevailing themes include teacher voice, empowerment, collaboration, communication, appreciation, and relationships.

Finding 1 reported that Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership (with informal engagement) and Readiness for Transformational Leadership (with formal leadership) are significantly related. However, Findings 3-9 reinforce Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership as a key driver for *all* teacher leadership engagement (both formal and informal). Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership includes encouraging active teacher voice, expanding levels of empowerment, articulating organizational purpose, connecting purpose to teacher motivation, building relationships, facilitating collaborative connections across campuses, developing responsive communication channels between teachers and administration, and cultivating an environment of appreciation for teacher contributions. Cutting across several findings, vertical alignment, campus-to-campus interactions, and new teacher mentoring emerged as avenues for increasing the cultural elements of relationship-building, communication, and collaboration. Findings indicate the importance for EHSD to address the *I Don't Know* and *I Haven't Been Asked* dilemmas currently existing due to a lack of awareness about participation pathways.

> **Key Takeaway #4** - **A Purpose Principle:** Teachers reported the connection of their motivation for teacher leadership engagement with the purpose of the engagement. Teachers indicated that knowing the *why* and the *impact* of their engagement served as motivators for participation. Moreover, teachers indicated that improving school conditions was a strong motivating factor (above compensation, professional growth, and recognition) for teacher leadership engagement.

When asked in the survey what factors most motivate a willingness to engage in formal and informal leadership, teachers indicated the desire to improve current conditions at their school as the top motivation. This finding, combined with deeper insight from interviews revealing the importance of connecting individual and organizational purpose in driving teacher motivation, indicates that EHSD should clearly articulate the purpose and vision for engagement opportunities, the reasons behind decisions, and the vision for district activities. In a transformational organizational culture, a primary focus includes purpose and vision (Bass & Bass, 2008). Vision is connected to transformational leadership and serves as a culture-builder in organizations (Sarros et al., 2008). By connecting both organizational and individual purpose to vision and culture, "goals are brought within the realm of everyday behavior" (Heath & Heath, 2010, p. 53), and the potential for teacher leadership engagement is magnified.

Recommendations

This study explored organizational and individual conditions, knowledge, experience, and supports needed to foster transformational teacher leadership engagement in East Horizon School District. In presenting the following 5 recommendations and action items, it is important to acknowledge there are always multiple ways to respond to challenges (Bolman & Deal, 2017), and teachers offer unique viewpoints of leadership (Appendix G). The recommendations introduced below (*Table 22*) are designed to serve as a catalyst for EHSD's capacity to think creatively and to adopt organizational strategies that ignite teachers' engagement in transformational leadership. By revisiting the conceptual framework of transformational teacher leadership, it is helpful to draw out 2 of the 4 categories of the Four I's of Transformational Leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006) on which the organization should focus most: Inspirational Motivation (purpose, meaning, vision, communication, motivation, and engagement), and Individualized Consideration (supporting, listening, mentoring, communicating, personalized interacting, and connecting purposes). It is within these 2 categories the majority of key takeaways and recommendations reside.

Table 22: Concept Map - Recommendations

	Theme	Recommendation 1
1	**System Thinking (See the System)**	Adopt a systems approach to better understand linkages, relationships, and interactions between organizational and individual purpose, context, policies, activities, and their impact on teacher leadership engagement across the district. **"In a system, everything affects everything else"** (Langley et al., 2009, p. 37).

A growing emphasis in leadership scholarship includes the capacity to see the system in which phenomena reside. As Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, and LeMahieu (2017) point out in *Learning to Improve*, it is imperative to engage diverse and multiple perspectives and identify the threads of interconnectivity that weave between and through the workings of the institution to "see" the system at play. By unpacking current relationships in the focal organization, we make visible the connections and complexities between organizational conditions and teacher leadership (2015). Termed the Central Law of Improvement, the statement claims, "Every system is perfectly designed to deliver the results it produces" (Langley, Moen, Nolan, Nolan, Norman, Provost, 2009, p. 79). When undertaking district-wide interventions to support teacher leadership engagement, it is important to remember small changes make a significant difference and that "big problems are most often solved by a sequence of small solutions" (Heath and Heath, 2010, p. 44). Specifically for this study, it is important to illuminate "the organizational conditions necessary for teacher leadership to function effectively" (Smylie et al., 2002, p. 166).

In *The Improvement Guide*, Langley at al. (2009) caution that "big improvements can often be realized by making small changes directed at the right places in the system" (p. 114). By adopting a learning stance (Stone, Heen, & Patton, 2010, p. xxxii) and embracing knowledge that comes from "learning fast to implement well" (Bryk et al., 2017, p. 7), the organization can approach future actions from a vantage point of seeking to better understand the system. Findings 3-9 highlight the powerful interplay of culture-related elements both enhancing and inhibiting teacher leadership engagement. Key elements include teacher voice, empowerment, communication, collaboration, appreciation, purpose, and relationships. To best understand how these organizational conditions influence teacher leadership engagement, EHSD should adopt a learning stance to see the connections among and between them.

As the organization considers the recommendations, it should embrace a philosophy of understanding the whole system at play and connecting organizational and individual purposes in driving improvement. For EHSD, this is strategically important due to teacher-reported variance occurring across campuses and an absence of clear linkages between organizational activities and individual motivations. By developing a competency for constructing a purposeful system (Ackoff & Emery, 2005) and identifying what is working, for whom, and under what conditions (Bryk et al., 2017), EHSD can infuse purpose into everyday behaviors (Heath & Heath, 2010) and address variance occurring across the district. By embracing open communication and adopting a learning stance when implementing change, the district is better poised to pursue improvements through feedback loops and cycles of learning (Langley et al., 2009).

Finally, through a purpose-driven, systems-thinking approach, it is important to focus on the ultimate objective: *improvement*. Recommendations and interventions are changes, but not all changes result in actual improvement (2017). EHSD should establish strong communication channels (see Recommendation 4) to implement the 2nd Central Principle of Improvement: cycles of feedback to determine whether improvement and intended results are occurring or not. EHSD should approach these recommendations as a buffet of options, rather than a sequential checklist of interventions. In selecting which recommendations to prioritize at what point, the district is reminded to start small and learn fast to generate buy-in and garner good will for future improvement initiatives (Bryk et al., 2017). Reflecting the interconnections of a system, the recommendations themselves are interconnected. If any number of the recommendations are

implemented, they will ignite responses and interactions by participants that produce further learning about how Culture drives engagement. By observing cycles of interplay between the intervention and participants, EHSD continuously learns and evaluates whether the recommendations are achieving the intended result of teacher leadership engagement.

Action Item #1 - "Purposeful System Thinking" Skill Set

To move in the direction of purpose-focused system-thinking, EHSD can embrace the following strategies (adapted for EHSD's context from *The Improvement Guide's* "Skills to Support Improvement" (Langley et al., 2009, pp. 27-46):

1) Understand the current system.
2) Identify and connect organizational and individual purposes.
3) Collect data and seek to understand the patterns.
4) Identify and seek to understand variation in the system.
5) Develop and select a change.
6) Understand the processes and systems of work.
7) Challenge the boundaries.
8) Evaluate the purpose.
9) Challenge why you are doing something.
10) Visualize the ideal.
11) Remove the current way of doing things as an option.
12) Remember the human side of change.

	Theme	Recommendation 2
2	**Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership**	Implement Culture-building practices to support all transformational teacher leadership engagement. Focus on teacher-specified Culture factors including teacher voice, empowerment, appreciation, purpose, and relationships. In so doing, the organization can begin to explore existing variation between teacher experiences. **"In the organizational transformational culture, there is a sense of purpose and a feeling of family…a sense of shared interdependence of leaders and followers"** (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 103).

Finding 1 reports the system is producing strong relationships between Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership (referred to as "Culture") and informal leadership engagement. However, qualitative data and Findings 3-9 report the system is producing strong relationships between Culture and *all* teacher leadership engagement, informal and formal. Using a purpose-driven systems approach, it is recommended to implement district-wide practices to build on current culture supportive of all teacher leadership. By approaching Culture with intentionality as a district, EHSD can foster conditions that lead to a more consistent experience for teachers across campuses. As Heath and Heath (2010) suggest in *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard,* "Anytime you have a bright spot, your mission is to clone it" (p. 43). By focusing on the bright spot of Culture and building on what the organization is currently doing well, it can maximize teacher leadership engagement.

Within the bright spot of Culture, teachers reported specific cultural conditions that can both support *and* inhibit teacher leadership engagement. EHSD should strive not only to have Culture, but to *be* Culture, and to focus on Culture not only as a product but also as a *process* (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Findings 3-9 draw out these areas and include teacher voice, empowerment, communication, collaboration, appreciation, purpose, and relationship-building. Since teachers report variance in how each of these cultural conditions affect their capacity for engagement, there is more work to be done. EHSD should explore these variances in future studies.

With *purpose* serving as an organizational North Star, EHSD should work to connect organizational purpose with individual purpose of teacher leaders. In Finding 8, teachers reported the influence of organizational and individual purpose in both inspiring and inhibiting their engagement. When teachers understand the purpose of an activity and attach it to individual purpose, they are more strongly influenced to participate in transformational teacher leadership. When one or the other (or the link between the two) is missing, teachers are less inclined to engage. By focusing on purpose and the embedded meanings of engagement, EHSD can connect organizational activities with what teachers actually value (Foldy, Goldman, & Ospina, 2008). Recalling the two I's of Transformational Leadership on which the organization should focus most, Inspirational Motivation and Individualized Consideration, the following action items are designed to build teacher trust, creativity, and confidence within a well-communicated culture of purpose and vision (Bass & Bass, 2009). Embracing a purposeful systems approach from Recommendation 1, EHSD should recognize, "in a system, not only the parts, but the relationships among the parts become opportunities for improvement" (Langley at al., 2009, p. 37). The following Recommendations and Action Items address these cultural elements, provide a path to build on current bright spots, and suggest approaches to address weak spots.

Action Item #2 - Culture Assessment Team (CAT Team): A Human Resources Frame

Culture includes people and the context within which they function. By considering the ongoing interaction and transaction between people and their context (Turner & Patrick, 2008), the organization can begin to see the joint accomplishment of leadership identity-building (Hand & Gresalfi, 2015) and recognize cultural practices supportive of transformational teacher leadership engagement. For this study, we considered Culture as the customs, habits, practices, norms, networks, and relational activities occurring across the organization. In the findings, teachers reported aspects of teacher voice, empowerment, collaboration, communication, appreciation, purpose, and relationships as cultural conditions contributing to or inhibiting engagement. By approaching the work of Culture-building through an organizational Human Resources frame (Bolman & Deal, 2017), EHSD can focus on the human side of change and learn from the interplay between increasingly-complex organizational conditions and individual participants.

Viewing organizational culture as a web of interconnections, EHSD can address several key conditions articulated by teachers in this study as necessary for teacher leadership engagement: purpose, teacher voice, empowerment, and relationships. Grouping these four cultural elements together signifies the overlap between cultural elements. Purpose does not exist in a vacuum - it imbues all other cultural elements. Teacher voice and empowerment are connected and can enhance or inhibit leadership engagement. Relationship-building impacts participants' sense of belonging, connects to a sense of empowerment to step up or speak out, and is embedded in everyday interactions and living conversations (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011). As Langley et al.

(2009) remind us, "In a system, not only the parts, but the relationships among the parts become opportunities for improvement" (p. 37). The relationships among the parts become the focus, and the Human Resources Frame can shine a light on Culture-building practices using high-involvement strategies (adapted from Langley et al.'s Basic Human Resources Strategies, 2009, p. 138 and incorporating this study's findings):

1. Develop a clear philosophy for culture-building practices that enhance transformational teacher leadership engagement - prioritize purpose, teacher voice, empowerment, and relationship-building.
2. Communicate that philosophy to your teachers.
3. Build purposeful systems and cultural practices to implement that philosophy.
4. Invest in your teachers.
5. Create collaborative learning and connection opportunities.
6. Empower your teachers. Listen to your teachers. Connect your teachers.
7. Provide information, support, autonomy, and meaningful opportunities for engagement.
8. Develop learning loops, 2-way communication, and feedback cycles.
9. Create more seats at the district decision-making table for teachers.
10. Include classroom teachers on all leadership committees and leadership teams in the district.
11. Follow up with teachers and stay connected to observe what is working - be curious.
12. Embrace open communication, improvement, and a habit of inquiry.
13. Expand district-wide events and opportunities to collaborate & meet as an entire district.

To activate this Human Resource Frame to Culture-building, EHSD can create a district **Culture Assessment Team (CAT Team)** comprised of teachers passionate about building Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership. By developing an active channel of input, involving teachers at all levels in the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2017), and designing structures for staff participation and collaboration (Leithwood & Sun, 2012), EHSD invites innovation by shaking up the routine and reinforcing that "leadership is an activity, not a position" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 335). A district-wide invitation provides the opportunity for all teachers to volunteer to participate, and all voices should be represented in the final makeup of the team. This self-directed team of teachers should have the capacity to appoint team leadership, set meeting schedules, determine action timelines, collect data, and present findings and recommendations to administration. The CAT Team can assess current hits and misses with EHSD district Culture and can work to align organizational ideology with teacher values (Pearlberg & Lavigna, 2010). The CAT Team itself embodies culture-building activities of collaborative networking, teacher development, feedback loops, communication, professional growth, and group problem-solving (Leithwood & Poplin, 1992). Administration can support efforts of the CAT Team by adopting the 13 principles of the Human Resources Frame listed above and ensuring the team has time and resources to assess the existing architecture of Culture, linkages and relationships, and the current impact of Culture on transformational teacher leadership engagement.

Finally, EHSD should think about the symbols it uses to communicate Culture on the district level. Since an obstacle to teacher leadership traditionally includes a culture of isolation (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 2003), EHSD should embrace opportunities to create symbols and rituals that signal to teachers what cultural aspects are valued as a district. The inclusion of more teachers in engagement opportunities like the CAT Team symbolizes that the organization values Culture-infusing elements of purpose, teacher voice, empowerment, and relationship-building in its effort to support opportunities for transformational teacher leadership engagement.

Activities like the CAT Team create powerful symbols, communicate values to organizational members, and reinforce the idea of designing organizations less as structures and more as relational communities of people and conversations (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011).

Action Item #3 - The Art of Appreciation

Finding 7 reveals a need for the organization to shape a **Culture of Appreciation** by evaluating current practices (or lack of practices) for teacher appreciation. In *The Human Side of Enterprise*, Douglas McGregor (1960) asserts that organizations accomplish tasks only through the efforts of other people, and leaders must view the whole process at play. By designing organizational structures that contribute to a Culture of Appreciation, the district can build on the human side of enterprise by providing affirmation for teachers' efforts and expertise. Briefly mentioned above in reference to building Culture, it would be useful for EHSD to adopt an intentional Symbolic Frame (Bolman & Deal, 2017) to signal to teachers what the organization actually values. Symbols comprise the foundation of the meaning system undergirding an organization's Culture. By using symbols to create a Culture of Appreciation that represents what the organization stands for, EHSD strengthens bonds and meaningfulness between teachers and the school, thus increasing capacity for potential teacher leadership engagement.

Cultural conditions are often interrelated and symbolically glued to the organizational construct. The relationships between structures, culture, symbols, and teacher leadership engagement are interwoven, impacting the organization's ability to reach its goal of supporting teacher leadership. In this case, a teacher's sense of appreciation can enhance or inhibit their confidence to engage. To create a Culture of Appreciation, administration can lead by example by redesigning district processes to establish consistency among campuses for norms, practices, and shared values of gratitude and recognition for daily work. Administration, both at the campus and district level, can adopt habits of praise and acknowledgement for teachers' ideas, contributions, innovation, and hard work. Administration can articulate plans of action to foster increased appreciation, remembering that plans are symbols (2017). Recommendations include adopting the following practices:

1) **See teachers' efforts and contributions** - You cannot appreciate what you do not notice. Administration at all levels should make it a habit to watch for activities where teachers are making a difference, going the extra mile, creating something new, or putting in untold hours.

2) **Off-Budget Acknowledgement** - Teachers report that little things make a significant difference. These "little things" are free and cost the organization nothing - a hand-written note in a teacher's box, an unexpected email, a personal text, or a word of thanks. Administration should make these gestures a daily practice and ensure all teachers' contributions are acknowledged in some way.

3) **Budget Acknowledgement** - The budget should include small but meaningful tokens of appreciation for teachers (surprise Sonic drinks on an afternoon, a food cart with free snacks on a random day, gift cards for exemplary service, etc.). Care should be taken that these budget acknowledgments are spread evenly across the district, so every teacher is touched by this gesture at least once during the year. If budget constraints prevent this allocation, perhaps corporate sponsors could be identified to underwrite the costs.

4) **Appreciation Event** - Symbols carry powerful and meaningful messages (2017). The symbolism imbued in an organization's activities and events can infuse culture and

influence its' actors. The district should consider an annual event to express appreciation to teachers district-wide. It is possible that a community or corporate sponsor would underwrite the cost of the event. Whether the event is large or small, it would signal to teachers that the organization values its people and appreciates their contributions. This event could be a district breakfast, luncheon, dinner, or an afternoon come-and-go reception with refreshments and door prizes.

	Theme	Recommendation 3
3	**Collaborative Connections across Campuses**	Implement a district-wide **LEAD Initiative**, including District & Campus LEAD Teams, a K-12 Idea Task Force informed by an Idea Emporium; **Vertical Alignment** (content & curriculum); and **New Teacher Mentoring** not limited to, but with a specific and intentional inclusion of TOYs. This recommendation addresses Cultural capacities for teacher voice, empowerment, collaboration, purpose, and relationship-building. **"Truly collaborative cultures…encourage the exchange of ideas and encourage mutual problem solving, thereby providing rich opportunities for the exercise of teacher leadership"** (Leithwood et al., 2003, p. 198).

In *What is Improvement Science, Do We Need it in Education?*, Catherine Lewis asserted the importance of learning across the boundaries (2015). In this study, participants shared how separated and isolated the various campuses, buildings, and teachers were from one another. A strong desire exists to collaborate and work together to bridge the space between campuses, grade levels, and subject matter. By suspending structures of hierarchy (Leary, 2008) and embracing teacher-led initiatives to drive change, the organization can facilitate increased collaboration and teacher leadership engagement across the district.

Exemplar teachers in a national report indicated the importance of a collegial and collaborative school culture to facilitate teacher leadership engagement for teachers at all levels of the teaching continuum (Behrstock-Sherratt, Bassett, Olson, & Jacques, 2014). In this study's findings, teachers reported a desire for purpose-driven collaborative leadership engagements to increase teacher voice, empowerment, relationships and a sense of connection in the district. EHSD can build a culture of collaboration by facilitating a sense of shared purpose, using organizational mechanisms to provide opportunities for mutual problem-solving, creating staff development opportunities that use teachers' knowledge, communicating and modeling the virtues of collaborative work, and using symbols and rituals to acknowledge and reinforce a collaborative work culture (Letihwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach, 2003). The following interventions are designed to spark active participation across boundaries and to signal to teachers what the organization values. Because organizational activities communicate meaning across contexts (Nolen, Horn, & Ward, 2015), EHSD can use these mechanisms to reinforce the cultural values of teacher voice, empowerment, relationship-building, and purpose. By cutting across the array of findings to see the interconnectivity between organizational conditions, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen collaborative connections across campuses:

1) LEAD Initiative (EHSD LEAD Team, K-12 Idea Task Force, Idea Emporium)
2) Vertical Alignment
3) New Teacher Mentoring

Action Item #4 - LEAD Initiative (LEAD Team, K-12 Idea Task Force, Idea Emporium)

EHSD should implement a system of formalized collaboration by creating a district-wide LEAD Initiative including district and campus LEAD Teams, a K-12 Idea Task Force, and an Idea Emporium. The district and campus LEAD Teams and K-12 Idea Task Force would be teacher-selected, teacher-governed, and vision-driven to focus on connecting organizational and individual purpose in driving district vision, culture, and school improvement. These teams need the uncompromising support of administration to reach their potential and magnify teacher voice. Previous work in the field underscores the importance of outreaches like the LEAD Initiative having the full support and encouragement of administration (Cherkowski & Schnellert, 2017; Behrstock-Sherratt, Bassett, Olson, & Jacques, 2014) to produce sustainable success.

The first component of the LEAD Initiative includes the **District LEAD TEAM** and **Campus LEAD Teams**. To ensure active participation and representation, each of the campuses could create their own peer-selected Campus LEAD Teams, from which two teachers would be peer-selected each year to represent their campus team on the District LEAD Team. To incorporate full teacher voice, new teachers (as well as teachers new to the district) should be welcomed to participate. Reflective of self-directed teacher inquiry teams (2017), the District and Campus LEAD Teams would function as autonomous but collaborative learning networks to drive Culture-building capacity for engagement while developing a sense of leadership in the district. By having teachers representing all campuses, the District LEAD Team would foster connections across campuses, consistent communication across grade levels, culture-building activities district-wide, teacher-driven initiatives, and leadership opportunities to ignite a spirit of engagement for all teachers at all levels. Campus LEAD Teams would be teacher-directed and could meet as often as they choose. The District LEAD Team could meet quarterly to review and discuss projects, programs, initiatives, or suggestions brought to the District Team by Campus Teams. The District LEAD Team could also serve as a facilitator for the K-12 Idea Task Force, as described below. Ultimately, the LEAD Team would meet with Administration to present teacher-driven innovations, initiatives, and engagement opportunities for school improvement. Through this collaborative process, teachers build confidence that ignites teacher leadership engagement and enthusiasm for change at both the classroom and school level (2017).

The second component of the LEAD Initiative includes the **K-12 Idea Task Force** and **The Idea Emporium.** The district could create an Idea Emporium (an ongoing, livable, accessible form like a Google Doc) where all teachers are invited to submit ideas and suggestions for leadership engagement opportunities and school improvement. The peer-selected **K-12 Idea Task Force** could meet once a quarter to review incoming suggestions in the Idea Emporium and determine priority ideas to communicate to the EHSD District LEAD Team. As above, it is suggested to maximize teacher voice by welcoming new teachers in the process (as well as experienced teachers new to the district). Specifically, the Idea Task Force can facilitate the culture-building characteristics of collaboration, teacher voice, communication, empowerment, purpose, and relationship-building identified in this study as influential conditions on teacher leadership engagement. To include as many teacher voices as possible, the Idea Task Force can have a new

slate of nominees each year to ensure fresh perspectives for incoming ideas, allow more voices at the table in subsequent years, and have full grade level representation (one peer-selected nominee each from K-12). The Idea Task Force could support the Cultural dimensions of collaboration, empowerment, and relationship-building as teachers work together at the district level to magnify teacher voice and champion fellow colleagues' ideas.

Action Item #5 - Vertical Alignment

In Finding 6, an idea emerged for a system of **K-12 Vertical Alignment**. EHSD should implement district-wide structures to support content and curriculum processes of vertical alignment. By establishing a collaborative system of interaction for teachers at all grade levels where meeting together is a priority, the organization will facilitate meaningful relationships and deeper understandings of professional alignment and content competency from Kindergarten to 12th grade. In effect, a system of vertical alignment becomes a learning community with mutual leadership coaching (Kets de Vries, Hellwig, Vrignaud, Guillen, Florent-Treacy, Korotov, 2009) within which teachers engage, relate, and grow as professionals.

It is important to note a specific challenge relating to K-12 Vertical Alignment (VA). Because many elementary teachers teach every subject, accommodations will need to be made providing these teachers adequate release time to attend VA meetings. For a middle school or high school teacher who teaches one subject only, attendance at VA meetings should not overburden their schedule. However, elementary teachers engaging in district-wide Vertical Alignment would be attending multiple content meetings, since they teach many subjects. Acknowledging this challenge, the district would need to create pathways for elementary teachers to attend all VA meetings. Elementary teachers could exchange teacher contract days or required PD days to attend VA meetings during the school year. In the spirit of empowering teachers in the Vertical Alignment space, EHSD could allow teachers to set their own calendars and meet as much or as little as needed each semester. Some VA teams might wish to meet more actively before the beginning of the school year while others might wish to meet more often during the year. Autonomy should be granted to these teams to meet as they deem necessary, and EHSD should enthusiastically support Vertical Alignment Teams' efforts in every way possible. In effect, the K-12 Vertical Alignment Teams become Professional Learning Communities (Behrstock-Sherratt, Bassett, Olson, & Jacques, 2014) and collaborative curriculum networks across the district. Building on this structure of alignment and to further strengthen district-wide collaborative efforts, the district should continue to fully support and expand Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and common planning periods for campus vertical alignment.

Action Item #6 - New Teacher Mentoring

A final recommendation for collaborative teacher leadership involves establishing a formalized, district-wide system of New Teacher Mentoring. In *Good to Great*, a national report of exemplar teachers, special emphasis was placed on connecting new (and struggling) teachers with mentor teacher leaders (Behrstock-Sherratt, Bassett, Olson, & Jacques, 2014). New Teacher Mentoring (NTM) is a pivotal component of addressing teacher retention, providing support and guidance, and helping "new teachers become veteran teachers" (Bolich, 2001, p. 2). Importantly, EHSD should incentivize and provide formal training for mentor volunteers, and this is one area where TOYs can serve as a valuable asset (See Recommendation 5). In the Culture of Appreciation outlined in Recommendation 2 (Action Item 3), the district creates opportunities to express

appreciation for teacher leaders participating in mentoring programs by official recognition or meaningful action - an appreciation breakfast, a thank you reception, or even surprise refreshments on a random afternoon of hectic classroom teaching.

Although current mentoring efforts at EHSD through the regional Education Cooperative are helpful and appreciated by some teachers, others expressed the need for a more hands-on and consistent NTM program to be implemented within EHSD itself. The district might consider TOYs (see Recommendation 5) and veteran teachers as primary teacher mentors, *although it should not be exclusive to these two groups.* By creating a New Teacher Mentoring program open for all teachers to volunteer, engagement opportunities will be created for current teachers who have a heart for mentoring and assisting colleagues.

A component of NTM might include a special outreach to teachers who are not new to teaching but who are new to the district. This group of teachers brings with them a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and experience from their years of teaching in other districts, but they might benefit from informative mentoring that addresses EHSD-specific information, practices, processes, or norms. Conversely, these experienced teachers who are new to the district might not at all be in need of mentoring but could actually *serve as mentor teachers* and should be invited to participate in the mentoring initiative. By implementing a strategic NTM program, EHSD can, in effect, create an in-house apprenticeship infrastructure as a way of learning and leading that connects those with knowledge, skill, and expertise with those who need it (Lave & Wenger, 1991). At the same time this knowledge is being exchanged, other important cultural conditions are being attended to that EHSD teachers said were important for teacher leadership engagement, including relationship-building, teacher voice, appreciation, communication, and empowerment.

	Theme	Recommendation 4
4	**Communication**	Implement a **4-Step Communication Guide** by redesigning system-wide communication processes for consistent & timely transfer of information from administration to teachers and from teachers to administration. Adopt a **Learning Stance** through curiosity and feedback loops. Create **Pathways for Participation** through engaging mechanisms to articulate campus and district processes and actively promote teacher leadership engagement opportunities. Explain the purpose and the *why*. **"This is perhaps the most powerful force…free-flowing communication is essential for sustaining progress, coordinating work, establishing trust, and conveying that people and their ideas have value to the organization"** (Amabile & Kramer, 2011, p. 109).

Action Item #7 - 4-Step Communication Guide & A Learning Stance

Whether it involves major organizational change or routine information, it is recommended for administrators to redesign campus and district-wide channels of communication to articulate purpose and to more consistently convey information, processes, changes, ideas, and updates to teachers. To infuse communication channels with the Culture-building element of purpose, the district should connect organizational vision with individual goals and motivations. Start and end

with *why.* Explain the reasoning and rationale behind decisions, actions, and organizational vision. Because individuals respond to organizational change, it is important to design communication channels that flow both ways - from administrators to teachers and back from teachers to administrators, establishing strong feedback loops and a culture of relational communication. The 4-step communication guide can help (Langley et al., 2009, p. 46):

1) Start early explaining and communicating the importance of the idea, change, or information.
2) Invite feedback from those impacted by the idea, change, or information.
3) Keep everyone informed and continue to provide updates at various stages of the idea, change, or information.
4) Share details regarding how the idea, change, or information will directly or indirectly impact individuals in the organization.

Instead of a message-delivery stance, the organization should adopt a **Learning Stance** (Stone et al., 2010, p. xxxii) and create continuous loops of communication-sharing, collective problem-solving, and mutual understanding. Teachers expressed a desire for more faculty meetings (with the caveat they are meaningful, informative, and impactful), and administrators could use this opportunity to ask questions, be curious, and seek feedback from teachers. In this communication interplay, administration and teachers create learning conversations by listening well, inquiring to learn, expressing authentic perspectives, and problem-solving together (2010).

Action Item #8 - Create Pathways for Participation

Findings 4 & 5 reveal a Culture of Hesitation regarding teacher leadership engagement. Many teachers hesitate to engage due to a lack of awareness about how to participate or because they are waiting to be asked or invited. In addressing the "I don't know" and "I haven't been asked" dilemmas, EHSD should create purpose-infused **Pathways for Participation.** In this Culture of Open Engagement, teachers interested in formal & informal leadership are empowered to volunteer and initiate participation without waiting on formal invitations from superiors. EHSD should clearly communicate the purpose for the engagement and the process for volunteering. Importantly, these processes must align across all campuses in the district. An elementary teacher should have the same process for engagement that a high school teacher has. *By ensuring building leaders and principals are on board with unifying these efforts from campus to campus, the district can align participation pathways equitably.* Remembering that "change isn't an event, it's a process," (Heath & Heath, 2010, p. 253), EHSD administrators and building leaders should adopt a long-term outlook to ensure a Culture of Open Engagement takes root in all levels and for all teachers on their respective campuses. While not limiting an administrator's ability to recruit participation, it is important for administrative leaders to encourage active teacher initiation, embrace a volunteering spirit among teachers, and help reshape the existing Culture of Hesitation into a Culture of Open Engagement. If a teacher volunteers, efforts should be made to ensure the teacher has a place of engagement in an activity meaningful to them. In communicating pathways for participation, special consideration should be developed for new teachers and teachers new to the district. Findings indicate these teachers felt they had limited voice and were not on the list for possible leadership participation. These teachers may be willing to serve, and the district could benefit from their innovative ideas and fresh perspectives.

	Theme	Recommendation 5
5	**Forever TOYs**	Formalize an impactful organizational role for TOYs by creating the ***EHSD Forever TOYs Community of Practice*** for current & former Teachers of the Year. TOYs can facilitate collaborative & relationship-building engagement, lead New Teacher mentoring, foster connections across campuses & serve as a **Voice for all Teachers**. *"Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor"* *(Wenger, 1998, p. 1)*

Action Item #9 - Forever TOYs Community of Practice

Cutting across findings, it is clear EHSD's Teachers of the Year offer a tremendous amount of potential in catalyzing transformational teacher leadership engagement. The collective expertise of these exemplary teachers provides the district with a powerhouse of innovative leaders who demonstrate excellence in the classroom and beyond. By mobilizing these teachers as a group, EHSD creates a living organizational resource that serves as a continuous touchstone for maximizing teacher leadership engagement. Once organized, Forever TOYs can set their own group-directed trajectory of shared learning and lead as a Community of Practice (Greeno & Gresalfi, 2008; Wenger, 1998). These peer-selected exemplar teachers bring unlimited potential for teacher leadership engagement. In outlining various capacities for TOYs to engage at a higher level, it is also important to underscore the role that administrative support plays in ensuring the long-term success and sustainable activation of this group.

As a brand new Community of Practice, Forever TOYs should be empowered to write their own blueprint for impact in the district. Envisioned as an operational, personal, and strategic network (Ibarra, 2015, p. 84), Forever TOYs can work together to develop professional goals, foster internal and external connections, and generate impactful ideas for transformational teacher leadership contributing to school improvement. In the spirit of a true *learning culture*, Forever TOYs can foster innovative experimentation, generate active feedback, engage in reflective practice, and adopt a commitment to learning to learn as an organization (Schein, 2010). The Forever TOYs Community of Practice will be a professional and social organization, meeting routinely to generate ideas, advocate for fellow teachers, mutually solve problems, serve as an innovation think tank, address policy impact, share suggestions, discuss evidence-based teaching methods, and contribute to an overall culture of collegiality and collaboration in the district.

Outlined earlier in Recommendation 3 (Action Item 6), New Teacher Mentoring is a prime opportunity to engage TOYs in an official capacity. In the *Good to Great* report, state and national TOYs reported an important influence in their careers included access to mentors who were themselves seen as exemplar teachers providing practical advice and relevant support (Behrstock-Sherratt, Bassett, Olson, & Jacques, 2014). In Finding 4, EHSD TOYs indicated their willingness to engage as mentors and provide encouragement and support to the district's newest teachers (or any teachers desiring a mentor). Furthermore, TOYs can serve not only as mentors themselves but can also help train others who volunteer to become mentors.

Action Item #10 - Voice for All Teachers

Ultimately, TOYs can serve as a voice for teachers in communicating to administration and fostering collaborative connections across campuses. In the Findings, TOYs indicated a willingness to serve as a liaison between teachers and administration and as an advocate for teachers' voices, ideas, and concerns. By facilitating open dialogue and modeling effective communication, TOYs contribute to a culture of magnified teacher voice, empowerment, and relationship-building. Fellow teachers will also feel a greater degree of empowerment, knowing they have TOYs on their campus who serve as mediators and facilitators for teachers' ideas and innovative thinking. An example of the "trickle-up teacher voice" that one TOY mentioned, this group can serve as the vehicle to make that happen through an established & consistent channel.

It is important for TOYs to know other TOYs and teachers on and beyond their campuses and to serve as relationship-builders and collaborators in the district. In the Findings, TOYs reported a lack of relationship and collaboration with other TOYs as well as a lack of relationship with other colleagues across campuses. Strong relationships and networks are pivotal for good leadership (Ibarra, 2015). Through the Forever TOYs Community of Practice, these teachers will have the opportunity to establish connections and collaborative relationships that foster dynamic leadership. Through this network, TOYs will have an opportunity to embrace ongoing, collaborative, and relational work as a collective group. Moreover, EHSD will benefit as Forever TOYs grow individually and collectively, adopt their own unique narrative as a group, engage across campuses, work together to mutually solve problems, forge connections with fellow teachers, and ultimately emerge as transformational teacher leaders for school improvement.

Limitations, Contingencies for Consideration, & Future Research

Limitations

A limitation could include the custom design of the survey instrument used for the study. An established research practice is to use a peer-reviewed survey to ensure internal consistency for survey scales. However, due to the nuance of this study and the objective of exploring the uniquely-constructed concept of transformational teacher leadership, the researcher elected to create a customized survey instrument. It is important to note the length of the survey might have been a limitation, since it was comprised of 59 items and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Respondents might have suffered from survey fatigue, indicating that the items near the end of the survey received less attention by respondents than items at the beginning or middle of the survey.

Contingencies for Consideration

Contingencies exist regarding the realm of transformational leadership and provide additional need for research, and exploration. Contingencies impacting the effectiveness of transformational teacher leadership include crises, situational circumstances, environmental variables, collectivistic societies, mechanistic and organic organizational structures (Burns & Stalker, 1961), organizational size, sector, and type, follower-leader face time, power distribution, task assignment, and goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006). These contingencies are important to note due to the realities of complex structures, activities, variation in lived experiences, and complex environments in a real-world setting, like the one selected for this study.

Importantly, the organization should consider implications for acting on this study's suggested recommendations. Research indicates teacher leadership engagement initiatives (or any change initiative) can result in unforeseen challenges or problems (Smylie et al., 2002). By implementing any of the specified interventions, it is possible that additional problems might arise, including stress, conflict, miscommunication, role confusion, and work-overload as teachers attempt to balance classroom responsibilities with campus and district-level engagement. In the midst of these possible challenges, the organization should remember that "real learning…is often triggered by the unexpected" (Behn, 2003, p. 596), and the unexpected presents an opportunity to learn. Furthermore, because "people will respond to the environment in which they operate" (Sinek, 2014, p. 165), EHSD should gather as much proactive, honest, and ongoing feedback as possible from any and all teachers engaged in the recommended interventions to assess how the system is evolving as changes are implemented.

In light of the enumeration of the above contingencies, it is important to note the timing of this study in the significantly altered environmental context of the 2020 Covid-19 global pandemic. Since all data were successfully collected prior to the organization's closing, it is reasonable to suggest that pandemic-related circumstances had no perceived impact on participation or responses to or in the study. However, the organization closed shortly after data collection was complete, and it is possible that the pandemic impacted the study or researcher in undetectable ways due to the disruption of daily activity and routine. Care was taken to preserve the integrity of the data, proceed with the study as planned, and maintain communication with the EHSD Superintendent regarding the scheduled timeline for data analysis, findings, and recommendations.

Future Research

Based on the findings from this study, several areas of future exploration are merited. **First**, more work is needed to probe the potential contribution by Teachers of the Year for transformational teacher leadership engagement in their schools. This study illuminates the opportunity for TOYs to play a significant and influential role in supporting teacher leadership engagement. It is anticipated that TOYs as a collective entity are underused in many school settings. Future research is needed to fully explore the extent to which campus and district TOYs can contribute in meaningful and impactful ways to positively influence transformational teacher leadership engagement. **Secondly**, it would be interesting to explore the gap between teachers who are currently engaged in teacher leadership and those who are not engaged but who are *interested* in leadership engagement. An investigation into the various reasons why teachers willing to engage in teacher leadership but not currently involved would yield insight regarding organizational conditions supporting and inhibiting teacher leadership engagement. **Finally**, the focal organization should consider exploring the reasons for the variance in teachers' lived realities in the district. Future research is needed to better understand why some teachers are empowered and others are not, some report strong teacher voice and others do not, some feel appreciated and others do not, and some have strong relationships and others feel isolated. Moreover, the organization should consider exploring the variance in leadership capacity by grade level, years teaching, and type of leadership (formal and informal). By understanding not only what is working but also seeking to understand where the system is not working, the organization can address weak spots while building on the bright spots shown to produce positive momentum for transformational teacher leadership engagement.

Closing

This study sought to understand the individual and organizational conditions influencing formal and informal transformational teacher leadership in the East Horizon School District. Embracing the philosophy that leadership is not solely located at the top of the hierarchical pyramid but present at all levels in and across the organization, this work drew on teachers' perspectives to illuminate the conditions fostering engagement in the district. Transformational teacher leadership lives in the "complex interactions of people" (Strodl, 1992, p. 16), leadership of a school is comprised of more than the singular dimension of administration, and "there is more than one leader" (p. 14). This work explored cultural landscapes that support the capacity for teachers to be transformational leaders without having to leave the classroom. Moreover, it sought a better understanding of the *system* and *process* of leadership and the complex relationships and connections occurring within those systems and processes.

> "One of the most universal cravings of our time is a hunger for compelling and creative leadership."
> James McGregor Burns, *Leadership*

Framed in a transformational teacher leadership conceptual lens, the study explored conditions most influencing teachers' capacity for leadership engagement. Findings revealed the importance of Culture in driving teacher leadership engagement, including the key themes of purpose, teacher voice, empowerment, collaboration, communication, appreciation, and relationships. Unanticipated findings underscored the importance for the organization to focus on *connecting organizational purpose with individual purpose*, communicating the *why* behind decisions, actions, and leadership opportunities, and emphasizing the *impact* of teacher engagement.

In proposing a set of recommendations that challenge the district to "see the system" (Bryk et al., 2017, p. 57) and focus on the North Star of purpose, this study introduces interventions as a buffet of options available to the district in improving transformational teacher leadership engagement. Additional recommendations include strengthening culture supportive of teacher leadership, fostering collaborative connections across campuses, and increasing communication. A final recommendation includes a special focus on Teachers of the Year and suggests activating this exemplary group of teacher leaders as a dynamic Community of Practice to further ignite transformational teacher leadership engagement in the district.

As EHSD moves forward, the district faces an opportunity filled with inspiring possibilities to shape the path for transformational teacher leadership by "tweaking the environment" (Stone et al., 2010, p. 183) and "building habits that serve the mission" (p. 216) of engagement. In pursuing its vision of improving leadership engagement, the district hopes to catalyze teacher leadership, infuse the district with purpose-driven initiatives, provide meaningful opportunities, and create a culture brimming with transformational teacher leaders ready to impact their school, their colleagues, and the lives of students for generations to come.

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Appendices A-L

Appendix A

Interview Guide

<u>Preliminary questions will include basic information:</u>
1. How many years have you been a teacher (total years)?
2. How many years have you been a teacher at this school?
3. What is your level of education?

<u>Open-response questions for individual influences (knowledge, experience, and support) for transformational leadership, activities, and empowerment:</u>
4. Please share your definition of leadership.
5. When you think of transformational leadership, what comes to mind?
6. Given your definition of leadership, to what extent do you identify as a leader right now? Why or why not?
7. Can you please describe any current leadership activities in which you are currently engaged?
8. Can you please describe any leadership activities in which you have engaged in the past?
   If they don't mention any, I will ask about the following:
   a) Mentor other teachers?
   b) Mentor students?
   c) Serve as a team leader (grade level, subject area, department level, program level, or curriculum coach)?
   d) Develop and/or select curriculum materials?
   e) Evaluate other teachers?
   f) Serve on a teacher hiring committee?
   g) Provide professional development?
   h) Work with teacher preparation programs?
   i) Advice on policies?
   j) Serve on a committee (personnel, policy, planning, improvement, etc.)?
9. Regarding your current or past leadership involvement:
   a) How did you come to be involved in these activities?
   b) What are/were your motivations for engaging in these activities?
10. Are you currently involved in leadership activities in the community?
    a) If so, how did you come to be involved in these activities?
    b) What are your motivations for engaging in these activities?
11. To what extent do you feel you have enough opportunities to participate in formal leadership activities?
12. Beyond formal leadership roles, to what extent do you have opportunities to participate in informal leadership?
13. What barriers do you encounter in trying to engage as a teacher leader?
14. How, if at all, are you being developed as a leader?
15. To what extent to you feel you have the support you need to be a leader?
    a) Support at the school level
    b) Support at the district level
16. To what extent do you feel empowered as a leader in this school and district?
    a) What supports your feeling of empowerment?
    b) What inhibits it?
17. Tell me about establishing your goals as a teacher. What shapes the goals you set? To what extent do you have authority to establish your own goals? In what ways does the school or district support you in meeting these goals?

<u>This portion of the interview will focus on organizational structure and culture:</u>

I want to first focus on the school:

18. Please tell me about the processes to establish school vision and goals.
    a) What opportunities are there for teachers to be part of these processes?
19. Please tell me about school culture.
    a) What opportunities are there for teachers to be involved in shaping school culture?
20. In what ways, if at all, does the school support teacher leadership?
21. If the goal was to foster more teacher leadership, what recommendations do you have for changing existing school organizational structures?

Now I want to focus on the district as a whole:

22. Please tell me about the processes to establish district vision and goals.
    a) What opportunities are there for teachers to be part of these processes?
23. Please tell me about the district culture. What opportunities are there for teachers to be involved in shaping the district culture?
24. In what ways, if at all, does the district support teacher leadership?
25. If the goal was to foster more teacher leadership, what recommendations do you have for changing existing district organizational structures.

Appendix B

TOY Focus Group Guide

Personal

1. What does being Teacher of the Year mean to you personally?

2. How did being selected TOY impact you professionally? Personally?

3. As Teacher of the Year:

   a) How did you participate in developing the vision for your campus, or district?
   b) What professional or personal goals did it help you achieve?
   c) How did it influence your capacity to impact campus or district culture?
   d) How did you collaborate with others differently than before?
   e) How did it impact your ability to be innovative and creative?
   f) How did it impact your motivation?
   g) In what way did it influence, if at all, the meaningfulness of your work?
   h) How did it influence your feeling of empowerment?
   i) In what way did it influence, if at all, your influence at the school or district?
   j) In what way did it contribute, if at all, to your feeling of being appreciated?

4. Is there anything specifically you would be willing to do as a former or current TOY that would be pro bono (no compensation)? With compensation?

5. In what ways, if at all, can Teachers of the Year serve as transformational leaders?

Organization

6. As a TOY, what recommendations might you offer regarding organizational **structures** (processes, systems, procedures, and guidelines) to facilitate more teacher engagement in transformational leadership (formal and informal)?

7. As a TOY, what recommendations might you offer regarding organizational **culture** (customs, habits, practices, norms, networks, and relational activities occurring across and throughout the organization) to facilitate more teacher engagement in transformational leadership (formal and informal)?

8. In what ways do you feel TOYs can impact organizational structure(s) to foster leadership opportunities?

9. In what ways do you feel TOYs can impact organizational culture?

10. Share ideas of how the school district could more effectively involve and utilize current and former Teachers of the Year?

Appendix C

<u>Survey Questionnaire</u>

<u>PART A – Transformational leadership, activities, and empowerment</u>
Rating scale 1-Disagree, 2-Somewhat disagree, 3-No opinion, 4-Somewhat agree, 5-Agree
At this school:

1. Teachers and administrators share a common vision of the mission/purpose of this school.
2. I am encouraged to improve my practice by gaining new knowledge, experiences, and skills.
3. I am encouraged to take initiative to make improvements.
4. My ideas and opinions are valued and respected.
5. I am recognized for my professional accomplishments.
6. I am generally satisfied with the work environment among teachers at my school.
7. There are opportunities for me to participate in decision-making.
8. Teachers are provided time and space for collaboration.
9. I participate in vision-building for the school.
10. I feel motivation for individual goal-reaching.
11. I feel motivation for organizational goal-reaching.
12. I participate in collaborative networking within and across the school.
13. I am encouraged to be innovative in and beyond the classroom.
14. I feel a high level of motivation toward my work.
15. I feel empowered.
16. I am interested in taking on a **formal** teacher leadership position (grade-level, department-level, building-level, curriculum instructor, teacher mentor, committee member).
17. I am interested in taking on more **informal** leadership roles (vision-building, individual and organizational goal-reaching, collaborative networking, culture-building, innovation, motivation, meaningful work, empowerment).
18. I have the necessary knowledge, skills, experience, and expertise to fill an informal or formal leadership position.
19. I would be willing to mentor new or struggling teachers.
20. I would be willing to model excellent instruction in my content area to other teachers.
21. I would be willing to lead professional development activities.
22. I would have trouble managing the additional responsibilities of a leadership position without additional release time.

To what extent will the following factors motivate you to engage in leadership activities:
Rating scale: 1-Not at all, 2-A little, 3-No opinion, 4-Somewhat, 5-A great extent

23. I would take on a leadership position for an additional compensation (e.g., a stipend).
24. I would take on a leadership position for recognition by my peers and administrators.
25. I would take on a leadership position to improve the current conditions at my school.
26. I would take on a leadership position for my own professional growth and stimulation.

<u>PART B – Organizational Structures and Culture</u>
Rating scale: 1-Disagree, 2-Somewhat disagree, 3-No opinion, 4-Somewhat agree, 5-Agree
Current organizational **structures** (processes, systems, procedures, and guidelines):

27. The district structures influence me to want to participate in **formal** leadership roles (grade-level, department-level, building-level, curriculum instructor, teacher mentor, committee member).
28. The district structures inspire me to foster a positive organizational culture.
29. The district structures encourage me to be innovative as a teacher and leader.
30. The district structures provide motivation to me in my daily work.
31. The district structures facilitate opportunities to learn and increase knowledge for leadership.
32. The district structures facilitate opportunities for impactful leadership experiences.
33. The district structures provide the support I need to participate in formal and informal leadership activities.
34. The district structures contribute to my ability to participate in meaningful work.

35. The district structures empower me.

The following questions are open-response (stop / start / keep):
36. What current organizational structure(s) would you *eliminate* to more effectively facilitate teacher engagement in transformational leadership?
37. What missing organizational structure(s) would you *implement*?
38. What current organizational structure(s) would you *continue*?

Rating scale: 1-Disagree, 2-Somewhat disagree, 3-No opinion, 4-Somewhat agree, 5-Agree

Current organizational **culture** (customs, habits, practices, norms, networks, and relational activities occurring across and throughout the organization):

39. The district culture encourages teachers to participate in a **formal** leadership role (grade-level, department-level, building-level, curriculum instructor, teacher mentor, committee member).
40. The district culture encourages teacher involvement in building the vision of the district.
41. The district culture supports me in achieving my individual goals.
42. The district culture includes teachers in achieving organizational goals.
43. The district culture facilitates collaborative networking within and across schools.
44. The district culture encourages me to be innovative as a teacher and leader.
45. The district culture motivates me to participate in formal and informal leadership activities.
46. The district culture facilitates opportunities to learn and increase knowledge for leadership.
47. The district culture nurtures opportunities to have impactful leadership experiences.
48. The district culture cultivates the support I need to participate in formal and informal leadership activities.
49. The district culture contributes to my ability to participate in meaningful work.
50. The district culture empowers me.

The following questions are open-response (stop / start / keep):
51. What current element of organizational culture would you *eliminate* to more effectively facilitate teacher engagement in transformational leadership?
52. What missing element of organizational culture would you *implement*?
53. What current element of organizational culture would you *continue*?

Concluding questions request basic information:
54. How many years have you been a teacher? *Scale 1-2, 3-5, 6-10, 11-15, 15-20, 20+*
55. How many years have you been a teacher at East Horizon School District? *Scale 1-2, 3-5, 6-10, 11-15, 15-20, 20+*
56. In what grade level do you teach: *Scale Pre-K-2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12*
57. Please select any of the following formal leadership roles in which you are active:
    a) Grade-level leader
    b) Department-level leader
    c) Building-level leader
    d) Curriculum instructor
    e) Teacher mentor
    f) Committee member
    g) Other
58. Please select any of the following informal leadership roles in which you participate:
    a) Vision-Building for the organization
    b) Individual goal-reaching
    c) Organizational goal-reaching
    d) Collaborative networking within and across the school
    e) Organizational culture-building
    f) Innovative
    g) Motivation
    h) Meaningful work
    i) Empowerment
    j) Other

Appendix D

VUMC Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent Document for Research

Principal Investigator: Beth Anne Rankin   **Revision Date: 10-31-19**
Study Title: Transformational Teacher Leadership
Institution/Hospital: Vanderbilt University

Name of participant: _____ Age: _____

The following information is provided to inform you about the research project and your participation in it. Please read this form carefully and feel free to ask any questions you may have about this study and the information given below. You will be given an opportunity to ask questions, and your questions will be answered. Also, you will be given a copy of this consent form.

What is the purpose of this study?

This project will focus on identifying both individual (teacher) and organizational (school and district) conditions that influence teacher engagement in transformative leadership (both formal and informal). This project will also focus on identifying what knowledge, experience, and supports that teachers need to engage in more transformational leadership. Surveys, interviews, and focus groups with teachers, educators, and staff at all grade levels will be conducted. The surveys are anonymous, and the interviews and focus groups are confidential. All identifiers will be removed from any written summaries or reports. The benefits of the study may include increased knowledge to inform leadership development and opportunities in the district.

You do not have to be in this research study. You may choose not to be in this study. You can stop being in this study at any time. Your participation is not required as an employee of this district. If we learn something new that may affect the risks or benefits of this study, you will be told so that you can decide whether or not you still want to be in this study.

Procedures to be followed and approximate duration of the study:

If you choose to participate, you will complete an anonymous survey and have an opportunity to volunteer to participate in a one-on-one confidential interview. The survey will be anonymous, and researchers will not be able to link responses with individual recipients. The interviews will be confidential and all identifiable information will be changed and removed from any written summaries or reports. Additionally, you may be asked to participate in a focus group. The focus groups are confidential and all identifiable information will be changed and removed from any written summaries or reports. Focus groups will contain 6-8 participants per focus group.

Expected costs:

There are no costs associated with the study.

Description of the discomforts, inconveniences, and/or risks that can be reasonably expected as a result of participation in this study:
There are no serious risks that can be reasonably expected as a result of participating in this study. The primary inconvenience is the time required to participate. The survey should take 5-10 minutes to complete; the interview should take approximately 30-45 minutes; and the focus group should last approximately one hour. Every effort will be made to protect privacy, however, there is the potential risk of loss of confidentiality.

Unforeseeable risks:

There are no unforeseeable risks associated with this study.

Date of IRB Approval: 11/06/2019

Institutional Review Board

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VUMC Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent Document for Research

Principal Investigator: Beth Anne Rankin   **Revision Date: 10-31-19**
Study Title: Transformational Teacher Leadership
Institution/Hospital: Vanderbilt University

Good effects that might result from this study:

1. **a) The benefits to science and humankind that might result from this study.**

   This research may contribute to our understanding of how teacher engagement in transformational leadership is facilitated and nurtured in a school and district setting.

2. **b) The benefits you might get from being in this study.**

   The findings from this research could be used to develop leadership opportunity initiatives and to better understand the conditions that support leadership development and engagement, although there may be no direct benefits to you.

Study Results:

The full publication of this study will be added to the Electronic Theses and Dissertation repository. This repository is a joint project of The Graduate School, Peabody College, and the Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries. The author of the study is Beth Anne Rankin.

Compensation for participation:

Interview participants will receive a $10 gift card to a local restaurant of their choice. Survey and focus group participants will receive no compensation.

Circumstances under which the Principal Investigator may withdraw you from study participation:

You may be withdrawn from the study for lack of participation.

What happens if you choose to withdraw from study participation?

If you choose to withdraw after your participation has begun, no further questions will be asked. Any information you have provided up to the point of withdrawal will be maintained as described below.

Contact Information. If you should have any questions about this research study or possibly injury, please feel free to contact Beth Anne Rankin at xxx-xxx-xxxx or my Faculty Advisor, Marisa Cannata at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this study, to discuss problems, concerns, and questions, or to offer input, please feel free to contact the Vanderbilt Institutional Review Board Office at (615) 322-2918 or toll free at (866) 224-8273.

Confidentiality:

All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Diligent efforts will be made to ensure that your participation in this study and your responses remain confidential. Your name will never be used in either data entry to research

Date of IRB Approval: 11/06/2019

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2 of 3

Institutional Review Board

⋁ VANDERBILT

VUMC Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent Document for Research

Principal Investigator: Beth Anne Rankin   **Revision Date: 10-31-19**
Study Title: Transformational Teacher Leadership
Institution/Hospital: Vanderbilt University

products that result from the study. Results will be presented so that no person is individually identifiable. Researchers will remove any personally identifying information, assigning a numeric code to identify participants and schools. Only key study personnel will have access to the coding system. Artifacts and research records, including audio-recordings, will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to these records, for up to 10 years, at which time it will be destroyed.

Privacy:

Your information may be shared with Vanderbilt or the government, such as the Vanderbilt University Institutional Review Board or the Federal Government Office for Human Research Protections if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law. Vanderbilt may give or sell your data without identifiers for other research projects not listed in this form. There are no plans to pay you for the use or transfer of this de-identified information.

STATEMENT BY PERSON AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY
I have read this informed consent document and the material contained in it has been explained to me verbally. All my questions have been answered, and I freely and voluntarily choose to participate.

Date Signature of patient/volunteer

Consent obtained by:

Date

Signature
Printed Name and Title

Date of IRB Approval: 11/06/2019

Appendix E

Recruitment Timeline (1/2)

Wednesday 1/15

- Initial invite email sent by EHSD Superintendent
- Email includes researcher's e-letter with survey link & request for interview volunteers
- Survey window opens
- Interview volunteer window opens
- Interview volunteers email researcher directly

Wednesday, 1/22

- Follow-up email #1
- Email includes survey link & reminder about volunteering to participate in interviews.
- Survey window remains open
- Interview volunteer window remains open
- Interview volunteers email researcher directly

Wednesday 1/29

- Follow-up email #2
- Email includes survey link & reminder about volunteering to participate in interviews.
- Survey window remains open
- Interview volunteer window remains open
- Interview volunteers email researcher directly

Recruitment Timeline, continued (2/2)

Monday 2/3

- Follow-up interview invite email from researcher.
- In that email, a reminder invite to volunteer for an interview and to complete the survey whose window is still open.

Wednesday 2/19

- Focus Group Email
- Sent to all current & former Teachers of the Year from EHSD superintendent and researcher.
- FG volunteers email researcher directly for scheduling arrangements.
- Survey window remains open.
- Interview volunteer window remains open.

Wednesday 2/26

- Follow-up focus group email from researcher.
- Sent to all current & formers Teachers of the Year.
- Focus Group volunteers email researcher directly
- Dates are chosen for Focus Groups.
- Survey window remains open until 2/28 at midnight.
- Interviews ongoing.

Thursday 2/27

- Final survey invitation email to all 253 certified district teachers from the principals.
- Survey window closes 2/28 at midnight.

Appendix F

The 5 Factor Scales in the Survey Instrument

Construct	Survey Item
Organizational Structure	Influence me to want to participate in formal leadership roles (grade-level, department-level, building-level, curriculum instructor, teacher mentor, committee member).
	Inspire me to foster a positive organizational culture.
	Encourage me to be innovative as a teacher and leader.
	Provide motivation to me in my daily work.
	Facilitate opportunities to learn and increase knowledge for leadership.
	Facilitate opportunities for impactful leadership experiences.
	Provide the support I need to participate in formal and informal leadership activities.
	Contribute to my ability to participate in meaningful work.
	Empower me.
Culture Supportive of Teacher Leadership	Encourages teachers to participate in a formal leadership role (grade-level, department-level, building-level, curriculum instructor, teacher mentor, committee member).
	Encourages teacher involvement in building the vision of the district.
	Supports me in achieving my individual goals.
	Includes teachers in achieving organizational goals.
	Facilitates collaborative networking within and across schools.
	Encourages me to be innovative as a teacher and leader.
	Motivates me to participate in formal and informal leadership activities.
	Facilitates opportunities to learn and increase knowledge for leadership.
	Nurtures opportunities to have impactful leadership experiences.
	Cultivates the support I need to participate in formal and informal leadership activities.
	Contributes to my ability to participate in meaningful work.
	Empowers me.
Transformational Leadership Readiness	I am interested in taking on a formal teacher leadership position (grade-level, department-level, building-level, curriculum instructor, teacher mentor, committee member).
	I am interested in taking on more informal leadership roles (vision-building, individual and organizational goal-reaching, collaborative networking, culture-building, innovation, motivation, meaningful work, empowerment).
	I have the necessary knowledge, skills, experience, and expertise to fill an informal or formal leadership position.
	I would be willing to mentor new or struggling teachers.
	I would be willing to model excellent instruction in my content area to other teachers.
	I would be willing to lead professional development activities.
	I would take on a leadership position for an additional compensation.
	I would take on a leadership position for recognition by my peers and administration.
	I would take on a leadership position to improve the current conditions at my school.
	I would take on a leadership position for my own professional growth and stimulation.
Empowerment	I am encouraged to take initiative to make improvements.
	My ideas and opinions are valued and respected.
	I am recognized for my professional accomplishments.
	There are opportunities for me to participate in decision-making.
	I participate in vision-building for the school.
	Teachers are provided time and space for collaboration.
	I feel motivation for organizational goal-reaching.
	I feel motivation for individual goal-reaching.
	I participate in collaborate networking within and across the school.
	I am encouraged to be innovative in and beyond the classroom.
	I feel a high level of motivation toward my work.
	I feel empowered.
General School Culture	Teachers and administrators share a common vision of the mission/purpose of this school.
	I am encouraged to improve my practice by gaining new knowledge, experiences, and skills.
	I am generally satisfied with the work environment among teachers at my school.
	I would have trouble managing the additional responsibilities of a leadership position without additional release time.

Appendix G

Participant-Driven Definitions and Descriptions of Leadership

Leader Matrix:

Engaged	Visible	Trust	Helps	Motivates	Consistent	Open
Thoughtful	Adaptive	Engaged	Serves	Responsible	Knowledgeable	Shows
Inspirational	Magnetic	Guides	Directs	Encourages	Inspirational	Supports
Delegate	Organized	Involved	Participative	Experienced	Serves	Listens
Explains	Models	Respected	Determined	Passionate	Charismatic	Intentional
Integrity	Ethical	Moral				
Lead by example	Role Model	Open-Minded	Decision-Maker	Open to change	Does what they preach	Puts ideas into action
Creates positive environment	Mindful of others	Helps others improve their lives	Getting people to do what needs to be done	If people like and respect you, they will do things for you	Does the right thing	Implements new things
Meet collective goals	Gets in the trenches	Shared goals	Gets people doing things they never thought they would	Sets high expectations	Make others want to follow suit	Outside the box
Makes you want to help them	Makes you want to be a part of it	Gets buy-in	Takes unwanted roles	Assists others	Fights the system	Work alongside
Walks the talk	Takes action	Gives feedback	Gets feedback from people in the trenches	Understands and sympathizes with people	Pushes people to do more and reach vision	Followers want to do it because of how you treat them
Puts people in positions, allows them to do their job	Set people up for success	Maximizes people's strengths	Hands On	Knows what and how it needs to be done	Shares Knowledge	Make people want to do what you want them to do
Not a micro-manager	Not top-down	Not a dictator	Not controlling	Not bossing people around		
Leadership Committee - include parents	Leadership Committee - include community	Leadership Committee - include more teachers				

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Appendix H
Summary Statistics for Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups

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Quantitative Survey Summary Statistics

Survey Population	All 253 EHSD certified teachers (including administrative positions who are current or former teachers and/or still classify as district certified teachers).
Survey Sample	The entire population was surveyed, so there was no sample for this study.
Survey Data Collection Dates	Spring semester (January - February)
Survey Window	6 ½ weeks
Survey Responses	159
Survey Response Rate	159 / 253 = 63%
Survey Incomplete Rate (submitted a survey but responded to none of the items)	26 / 159 = 16%
Survey Completion Rate (of those who responded) - includes 7 partial completions (at least 25% of the items completed)	133 / 159 = 84% (Respondent Population)
Survey Completion Rate (of total population)	133 / 253 = 53% (Total Population)
All-Agree Surveys (100% "Agree" responses)	5
Data Analysis	■ Exploratory Factor Analysis ■ Confirmatory Factor Analysis ■ Cronbach's Alpha reliability test ■ Pearson Correlation ■ Spearman's Rho Rank Correlation ■ Fisher's Exact Test

Interview Summary Statistics

Interview Population	All 253 certified teachers	All 253 EHSD certified K-12 teachers (including administrative positions who are current or former teachers and/or still classify as district certified teachers).
Interview Sample	22 volunteer participants	- 21 certified teachers - 1 administrator (former teacher) - Did not use administrator data in final qualitative coding
Interview Representation	All campuses represented by participants.	Elementary, Middle, & High
Interview Data Collection Dates	4-week window	Spring semester
Interview Delivery	21 in-person	1 via telephone

Interview Type	Semi-Structured	Audio-Recorded (expect for telephone interview, which could not be recorded)
Interview Locations	On- and Off-Site	-Administration & campus conference rooms -Teacher classrooms and/or office -Local public library
Interview Incentive	$10 gift card	$10 gift card to a local restaurant of their choice
Interview Lengths (Range)	24 - 58 minutes in length	
Average Interview Length	48 minutes	
Total Interview Hours	18 hours and 3 minutes	
Field Notes	Interview notes	Hand-written notes taken during interviews
Transcription Initial Upload	18 hours	-**Listening Tour # 1** -Review during the transcription process as audio files were uploaded into Otter.AI transcription service
Transcription Clean-Up	100 hours - in-depth	-**Listening Tour #2** -Intensive review during the Otter.AI transcript clean-up process
Summary Notes	Listening notes	-**Listening Tour #3 & Subsequent Analysis** -Coding (40 emergent codes), thematic analysis & synthesis with 12 key themes & quote identification.

Teacher of the Year (TOY) Focus Group Summary Statistics

Focus Group Population	All 22 current and former Teachers of the Year	All 22 current and former Teachers of the Year were invited to participate in the TOY focus group.
Focus Group Sample	9 volunteer participants	9 / 22 TOYs participated
Focus Group Data Collection Dates	3-day window	Spring semester
Focus Group Participation Rate	41%	9 / 22 TOYs participated
Number of Focus Groups	2 focus groups total	Focus Group A= 3 participants Focus Group B = 6 participants
Focus Group Representation	All levels represented by Focus Group participants.	Elementary, Middle, and High
Focus Group Delivery	In-person	2 separate in-person focus groups
Focus Group Lengths	48 - 55 minutes in length	Focus Group A = 48 minutes Focus Group B = 55 minutes
Focus Group Type	Semi-Structured	Audio-recorded
Focus Group Location	Administration Building conference room	A free light supper was served (pizza)

Field Notes	Focus Group notes	Hand-written notes taken during both focus groups
Transcription Initial Upload	Listening notes	-**Listening Tour # 1** -Review during the transcription process as audio files were uploaded into Otter.AI transcription service
Transcription Clean-Up	Listening notes	-**Listening Tour #2** -Intensive review during the Otter.AI transcript clean-up process
Summary Notes	Listening notes	-**Listening Tour #3 & Subsequent Analysis** -Coding (22 emergent codes), thematic analysis, and thematic synthesis with 8 key themes & quote identification.

Survey Open-Response Summary Statistics

Survey Open-Response Population	All 253 EHSD certified teachers (including administrative positions who are current or former teachers and/or still classify as district certified teachers).
Survey Open-Response Sample	The entire population was surveyed, so there was no sample for this study.
Survey Open-Response Data Collection Dates	Spring semester
Survey Open-Response Window	6 ½ weeks
Survey Responses (Total, including incompletes)	159
Survey Response (Completions)	133
Survey Open-Response Rate "Stop-Start-Keep" (Category 1 - Structures)	50 / 133 (38% response rate)
Survey Open-Response Rate "Stop-Start-Keep" (Category 2 - Culture)	27 / 133 (20% response rate)
Survey Open-Response Rate "Stop-Start-Keep" (Category 3 - Final Thoughts)	16 / 133 (12% response rate)
Limitations	Survey fatigue - responses decreased by 50% each time an open-response text box appeared on the survey

Appendix I
Key Themes Matrix - Interviews

Key Themes -13	Quotes	Ideas	Other Perceptions
1 - Purpose	I'm a Why Guy.	You see the value when requirements have purpose and a need.	Committees should arise if and when they are actually needed. What is the point/purpose of the committee/meeting?
	I believe what I'm doing matters.	Focus on the big picture - less tunnel vision.	The "WHY" is important.
	I don't know why we don't do that anymore.	Administration is busy. Administration should focus.	Explain why, tell the why. Explain the no's. Give the reason. Give the purpose.
	I have to have an end to my start.	Why are we doing this?	I need to believe it matters.
	I learn by WHY.	Focus on impact of committees and engagement.	Say "why."
	What's my impact?	They make you feel like you matter, that you're making a difference.	Focus on the purpose & impact (mission, mission, focus).
	Why do I have to leave the classroom (to be a leader)?	Leadership Committee would be nice, but it depends on what the goals are.	What's the point? What's the effect?
	I don't mind doing anything as long as I know there's a purpose in it.	Keep my list of goals with me in my binder.	Why - explain why. If no, why no?
	I believe what I'm doing matters.	Leading PD is on my Goal List.	Pre-meeting survey - tell why we are having a meeting
	What if I could have been a better teacher? Or I could have been a better leader? Or I could have been a better something?	Purpose & Motivation - When I see a need. Do what's best for the kids. I'm the voice for that child.	Tell us the "why" behind the policies.
	Why? People will support it if they understand why.	Purpose - To improve things. Daily impact. Improvement. To know I make an impact.	Why get involved if it doesn't matter?
	My piece is important.	Failure is not failure if you're learning something from the process.	Impact - What is the impact of my participation?
	I want to make a difference.	You want to be a part of it.	Survey Purpose - where does the data go?
	There's very, very, very little that I won't do to benefit these kids.	Resent extra effort - why am I doing this?	Without the "why," people fill in the blanks.
	I struggle with wanting to engage…if I know I can't have an effect.	Administration should give you a reason, it shouldn't just be "no"	I need to believe it will have an effect, make a difference, and change things.
	If I knew participating or leading in one of those groups or teams was actually able to change things.	Previous school - knew the big picture, understood the why behind policies; were invested, wanted to improve things.	If I only reach one, one is a big deal. It really is a big deal.
2 -Relationships	When asked if I know someone, I say, "I don't know anybody."	Grooming another teacher to take my spot.	Only see people once a year.
	Sometimes you feel like you're alone.	Trust. Be trusted.	Don't know the teachers in other grades.

	You gravitate toward people you feel are making things better.	Relationships happen on their own, outside of school.	Good relationship w admin- you sense the trust (bouncy, bubbly, strong morale).
	I don't feel it's really desired that we have a good relationship (with admin). I don't think it's 'I want to get to know you.'	Relationships, valuing people, & meaningfulness are key.	More approachability with administration.
	The district (PD) meeting - that's a day I enjoy.	Lack of relationship with administration.	District Relationships - "talk no walk."
	Sometimes we just need to talk to another adult.	Relationship with Administration - they are like "Fake it til you make it."	We care about our people.
	I don't know most of who works on other campuses. The only time we have full district meeting is the first week. That's a day I enjoy because I get to see who all actually works here.	District PD Day - Keep this. FUN! You get to sit with other people. Some sit with their own group & don't meet new people. Some sit by themselves.	Would love to be on something where you meet with people from all over the district.
	I'm going to build that relationship (with students). They know it's a safe place and that I love them.	Relationship with Community partners - it's a joy! Kids come in excited.	Want more camaraderie.
	I really love these people. You become like family.	I didn't know anybody.	Not from here, lack of old connections.
	We don't all know each other.	We talk a lot, we're all in the lounge, parties, fun.	Some teachers feel isolated.
	I don't get to talk to adults all day.	I used to know people. Now, I don't know what grade they teach or who they are.	Barrier - People not caring, not showing up.
	I don't know anyone.	No one is mentoring me.	Admin - Show you care.
	I can go weeks without talking to an adult. I really don't see anyone.	If teachers aren't seeking out relationships, it's not going to happen.	I don't know other teachers, and I'm from here.
	That's a family. That's a family.	Student-Teacher relationship is important. I want to know my students better. I stay because of the relationship with my students.	Admin - Frightened, sometimes, to say anything to them, don't feel like they're personal for you to talk to.
	My teacher group, they're amazing. They've got your back, share resources, boost you up, encourage you.	Relationships are key. Especially when someone raises their hand to give an idea.	Need the social aspect, need social time, need fun!
	It's hard to know people.	Friend to students, I pay attention to students. I am a mentor.	I want to meet people.
	If they don't work on my campus, I don't know them.	Good humans, not just good students.	To students: You are so much more than your letter grade.
	If you ask me who's the principal, literally, at the building next door, I have no idea, because I've never seen that person before.	Know who we are. Know our first names.	Cousin works in the district, and I didn't even know it.
3-Empowerment	I can be both - Leader & Follower	I am limited by the system.	Morale not bad, but it could be better.
	I get treated like an equal.	There are very clear lines between roles. Feel locked in. Get stopped.	
	Administration kills empowerment if they're not in my corner.	Don't limit how many copies a teacher makes.	Get empowerment from students and PLC.

	I have plenty of power.	Don't micro-manage.	I want to choose my style of teaching, what I teach & how I teach. I don't want to be told to teach a certain way.
	Some teachers feel stuck.	New and different things sometimes fail.	Want to choose my curriculum.
	Administration gives control to facilitators. Facilitators give control to teachers. Teachers give control to students.	Empowered - when I see things work.	Want more unstructured teaching time.
	I didn't feel like it really mattered.	Empowered - when I am needed.	Use new teachers.
	I am passionate about what I do.	Empowered - when I share my knowledge.	Non-core content teachers feel tip-toey.
	I get to be part of the solution.	Empowered- when I have autonomy.	Allow teachers to lead and believe in your teachers.
	I feel powerless to make things happen.	Empowered - when teachers come to me, observe me.	
	We are turned down a lot of times for our ideas.	Empowered - when the admin supports me, shows up, has my back, when I am taken seriously and not nit-picked.	Instead of griping, I close my door and think of something positive.
	On Leadership: "As a novice, I feel like I don't have as much power in that.	Empowered - when I mentor.	In the trenches = best work
	I feel empowered in my classroom.	Stay in the Lane, Play the Game, Parameters that Stifle Creativity - I broke out!	Kills empowerment - Lack of vision and negativity
	When I go in my room and shut the door, I'm empowered.	Empowered - having people on your side.	Middle School Academy - Admin empowers teachers, teachers empower students.
	I was working in isolation.	I am a leader only in my classroom. Not a leader anywhere else on campus.	Empowerment: 9-10 with students 3-4 with fellow teachers
	33-second delay: "I don't feel empowered. I don't.	Teachers need to be open to change.	Difference-Maker
	I've learned to just shut my door and do what I do.	Allowed to be "me" in my classroom.	I never want to leave the classroom.
	In my classroom, I make the decisions.		
4-Teacher Voice	There's not an opportunity to voice your opinion in that way.	PLC - express opinion freely. Outside of the PLC - different dynamic (not heard).	Need an outlet for teacher expression. Need platform where teachers can be heard.
	Administration comes to me.	Teachers don't give advice on policies.	Ideas are valued, but only "in my lane."
	That was really nice to be heard.	Listen to new teachers who have good ideas & fresh, new perspectives.	Leadership Team needs teachers, not just administration and facilitators.
	My duty is to share my opinion.	Administration listened.	Town Hall
	Administration - let us know you want to hear from us and listen to us.	Administration - don't patronize teachers if you already made the decision.	Stay in the parameters - don't get a lot of "say-so."
	I automatically assume that it's (idea) just gonna get shot down.	They're not hearing me.	Administration - listening to teachers has to be in your heart.
	They cut the classroom teachers out (leadership team).	Hear us. Hear my ideas. Act on ideas. Use our ideas.	Let teachers ask questions

	I am a voice for teachers to administration.	Admin - Needs to trust teacher voice & ideas.	Need K-12 Leadership Team & K-12 Content Team
	Teachers get caught up in the mindset that we're victims and don't have a voice. But we do. (We're) not using it.	Teacher Input v. Teacher Sign-Off.	Don't pre-set the agenda or patronize teachers if the decision has already been made.
	(As a novice), what kind of voice do you have in that?	Trickle-Up Active Voice.	Teachers are not comfortable speaking up.
	Teachers can have active voice in many things without having to leave the classroom. That's the fear. That when they go into an admin supervision, your best teachers leave the classroom.	Listen.	I think the Superintendent is diplomatic and wants many active voices involved in decisions.
	I want all voices at the table when decisions are being made.	Take us seriously.	Admin - wants active voice from teachers.
	District Meetings - There's times you feel they don't want any questions asked.	Admin needs to listen to new ideas, but teachers need to listen to new ideas, too.	Ideas - Need formal process for teachers to submit ideas.
	I can see my own fingerprint in certain decisions.	We won't have any say. We were shut down.	
5-Engagement	I volunteered.	Opportunities are everywhere, some choose to ignore them.	Opportunities are lacking. Need more opportunities. Need more committees.
	What if I'm the only one that would have shown up, and I didn't? That nobody did? On motivation for engagement.	PLC and PPC are good avenues. Need more opportunities outside the PLC.	Teachers need to attend things. Go for 15 minutes. Just show up.
	Motivation - I think I can still help people.	Barrier - some teachers live in other towns (commute).	Opportunities are not presented to everyone, only a select few.
	When I see a need, I am there.	Barrier - same people all the time.	Informal - Lots of opportunities
	I initiated it with the Superintendent.	Attend games and events, support students, participate.	Informal - need more of these
	Why do I have to leave the classroom (to be a leader)?	Burn-Out	Formal - limited, less opportunities
	I have to initiate, right?	Come early, stay late, attend events, say yes to committees - I want to make a difference.	Rotate people in and out of leadership positions.
	I don't just teach and go home. They see me everywhere.	All teachers should lead something.	Positions are already filled.
	I wish I was a part of any of it. You learn.	Need more engagement.	There's no time.
	I'd like to have more of an opportunity, more a chance, more of a choice to be involved in things.	Attend events, games, always be outside the classroom.	Anything the kids want me to go to, I usually go.
	I'm always willing to help people.	Participation would backfire, veteran teachers like doing it their way.	Committees are a way to plug in people on the edge and get them involved.
	They (students) know it's not something I have to do.	Teachers teach and leave.	Want others to match my level of enthusiasm.
	Whatever committees are available that I can jump on, I jump on them.	Engage - if it has an effect.	In high school, I was in everything. Here, everybody already has their thing.
	I volunteered.	Engage - if I see a need.	PD - Use teacher talent
	No chance to volunteer.	Need enthusiasm.	
	I pursue the opportunities.	PLC - I love it. It keeps me going.	Previous school - served on all committees, but few here.
	I'm fine doing what I'm told and taking a backseat.	Engagement - I love ideas, I love projects.	Spear-headed projects, were given free reign.

	I haven't felt like there's even been much of a chance to do much of anything.	Engagement - I loved knowing everything that was happening.	More experiences and field trips for students
6-Communication	Listen. Respect our ideas.	Give more feedback, more pointers, more constructive criticism, more communication, more conversations.	Host an Open Forum so teachers know what conversations are in play.
	A lot of times, it's the quietest person in the room that's got the best ideas.	Need a system of communication.	Follow-up on surveys - what happened to the data? Results?
	Everybody likes consistency.	Need more committees - where important conversations take place.	Think of the TIMING of communication (especially emails and surveys).
	We as teachers still have to learn. We have to learn about change and what's happening next. We don't always have that willingness, just like the students don't.	Want feedback from observations.	Need K-12 Content meetings.
	I'm giving my ideas…but I don't have anything much in that.	Include community & parents on committees to heighten communication.	Weekly meetings need to be part of the culture.
	Keep teachers in the loop.	Email better than All-Call	Small meetings can be effective.
	Give teachers a heads up.	Communicate who is on what committee, so teachers know who to talk to and who to take ideas to.	Google Idea Form to solicit teacher input, ideas, and feedback.
	Administration: Sit with us and brainstorm.	Administration is visible.	Surveys are good.
	Administration: Have a pow-wow with teachers and talk - share ideas.	Surveys are good, emails are good to gather ideas, but follow-up is needed.	Need Vertical Alignment.
	Administration: "If there's no communication, how will they know I want to step up?	Stop the one-sided conversations & open the lines for 2-way communication.	Need better communication between teachers.
	Negative feedback from teachers makes me tip-toey about what we're doing.	More face-to-face communication.	Provide information to everyone.
	I shelter my dialogue. - Need safety and trust.	Conversation with teachers - should be a constant conversation.	Word-of-Mouth not effective way to communicate (like the Telephone Game).
	Survey Data: "We don't know what happens to it. It leaves the feeling that nothing is happening to it. Collecting data for the sake of collecting data. Where does the data go?	Teachers are open with communication and want to be comfortable talking to each other and to administration.	Administration - share ideas with teachers. Don't wait for teachers to bring ideas to administration.
	It's the unknown that causes most of the problem.	Need more faculty meetings.	Communication is inconsistent among campuses.
	Stop asking for opinions as a formality when it's a pre-planned decision.	There's no communication, even on small things.	Administration - Inform teachers ahead of time, give advanced planning time.
7-Awareness (I Don't Know)	I don't know.	Was on a Leadership Team, but not anymore, don't know the process.	Don't know the process.
	If you're not on the leadership team, you don't know what the leadership team is doing.	Is there a leadership committee?	Don't know conversations in play.

	I'm not aware, or I would probably be interested (leadership opportunities).	Ideas, but then what?	Vertical Alignment - I don't know.
	I have no idea what's going on at the high school half the time.	PPC - Don't know if we still have that.	Don't know things are happening.
	I don't know the selection process.	Process - Everybody probably writes their own script here.	Admin - I don't know their schedule, I don't know what all they do.
	I don't know that I know it's out there.	We need processes.	Admin - I don't know their titles or roles.
	If there's a district-level culture, I would not be aware of it.	Wish teachers were in the loop on opportunities.	Opportunities - I don't know if I have the chance (to participate)?
	I didn't know the process. I asked.	Communication - I don't know the process of how to communicate with other teachers.	Opportunities - I have to initiate, right?
	I have a lot of great ideas, and a lot of great things I want to do, but it's hard to figure out what to do and how.	When I have an idea, I go straight to the Superintendent.	Opportunity is there, but I don't know the process.
	I wait to be asked. I wait to be invited.	Trust the process - but teachers don't know what the process is.	I don't know how I would go about it (if I wanted to serve).
	We don't know what happens to it. It leaves the feeling that nothing is happening to it (survey data).	Leadership Team? - I'm not sure.	I have no idea - I don't even know who I would ask.
	I don't think there is one (process for leadership).	I don't know administrative roles. I don't know what administrators do.	I don't know what happens after the emails.
8-Appreciation	Administration point blank said, "You cannot imagine how much I appreciate you doing this."	Administration is busy, don't have time to develop culture.	Teachers should come to school happy. Shouldn't dread school. Some teachers hate to come to school. Need to be happy.
	Being appreciated changes the whole culture of things.	Need more gratitude.	Need more joy. More Fun.
	Honestly, no one's ever really excited to come into work.	The superintendent came in my room.	Let our teachers shine. Use talent in the district.
	It makes me feel like I'm doing my job well, when I go to them with a concern, that it's acknowledged and addressed.	Administration notices extra involvement.	I feel invisible, like no one notices.
	I encourage other teachers.		I feel appreciation most of the time.
	I don't know if anybody cares. I do all this stuff…but I don't know if anybody notices.	It's just little things.	Administration notices the ones that show up and the ones that don't.
	I really wish people would say they appreciate what I'm doing. Or they would thank me. Or ask me about more things. Or ask my opinion about things.	Need fun workplace.	Affirm teachers. Appreciate people.
	Lack of appreciation wears on you.	Admin needs to show appreciation and that they care.	Need encouragement, need a cheerleader.
	If you're not appreciated for what you do, you forget you need to show appreciation to other people, too.	Teachers need comfort, praise, to be pushed, but this gets put on the back burner	It's the little things: appreciation, encouragement, note in my box, a Sonic drink, a little email, food cart during the holiday.
	Some days I feel defeated.	Empower others through encouragement.	Need morale boosters and more enthusiasm.

		Want to be more joyful to come to school every day.	Need more smiling, more greeting, more fun, more pep.
	It's just little things that changes how somebody feels.	Recognition for all achievements - not just certain popular groups or teams.	Teachers & students alike need appreciation and recognition.
	There's no defined culture.	Administration expressed appreciation, but it didn't last.	Culture - one of the best. It could have been great the entire time. It really feels great now, because I'm starting to see things from a different perspective.
	When you feel better, you teach better.	Discouraged. Disheartened. Frustrated. Overwhelmed. Burned-out. Suffocated. Really tired. Bogged down.	Little things make our life better.
9-Support	I am not undermined.	Need consistency.	Admin - needs to be seen, more visibility, more open, more availability.
	Administration will go to bat for me 150%.	Need more administrative roles available to help teachers.	Admin - perception is different on different campuses.
	PLC's are revolutionary. It's nice to have support.	Need a Floater - someone available all day to help teachers. Teachers need immediate help.	Admin - is open, visible, approachable.
	My PLC - keeps me sane. It keeps me here.	Need flexibility.	Admin - some boss instead of lead.
	PLC's help me learn and grow as a professional every single time.	Want autonomy in curriculum development.	Admin - need more approachability.
	I'm not being developed as a leader.	Like administration's open-door policy.	Admin - need more consistency with policies.
	When I go to my administration, I am heard.	Need someone in my corner.	Admin - listens.
	Administration needs to be on the teachers' side. Support the teacher.	Good techniques in the classroom are good techniques in administration. Same principles apply.	Admin - need to support teachers and have their back.
	I only go to administration when you have a problem.	Lots of ideas, little support.	Admin - didn't nitpick my idea.
	Superintendent sitting in class. Who can't be inspired when you see the Superintendent doing the same things you're doing?	Need mentoring program for new teachers and teachers new to the district - someone you can go to right now.	Admin - show you care, support ideas, be approachable, be sincere, give support in daily issues, spend time in classrooms.
	With admin support, I was able to do things and improve things.	Admin supports, but colleagues don't.	Admin - don't see them, not around, only seen when there's a problem.
	How do you make it to where it's just like a system that works evenly?	Need Idea Point Person	Admin - gives good, solid support.
	Sharply different." (Culture, rules between buildings).	Facilitators are valuable.	Admin - you can text, email, they've never not responded.
	There's the rule, and there's what is done.	Need New Teacher Mentoring.	Admin - be consistent across grades, buildings, and campuses.
	Different rules for different campuses.	Need K-12 Consistency.	Need more administration: Dean of Students (discipline) and Dean of Teachers (support)

	11-second delay: I don't know that I'm being developed as a Leader.	Need Departmental Days	Wrote a grant, it was supported.
	When you're supported, there's nothing that can stop you.	PD - Needs to improve: give choice, encouraging meeting new people, want more district-wide PD	Superintendent - helpful and easy to talk to.
	They already have planned what we're going to say and what we were going to do.	Contract Days are great.	Co-Op provides good support & gives good PD.
	If it's not their idea, they don't want it.	Common Planning Period (CPP) is great.	Consistency - different responses from different admin; different campus-to-campus.
	Decision-makers have been out of the classroom so long, they don't know what & how we're doing things.	Meetings - don't take entire time if during planning time. Schedule when there is information to share. Need more meetings, if they are significant.	Superintendent sat in training - it was inspiring.
	Planning time is my grounding, but it's crammed.	Teacher prep (from college programs) is weak.	Superintendent is approachable.
	Admin does us like we sometimes do students - just want them to get to the right answer.	Different rules on different campuses.	Support comes from fellow teachers, not Admin.
	Told to "stay in my lane."	Need more faculty meetings.	Superintendent = I would be comfortable going to him. If I had an idea, he'd go with it. He has changed the atmosphere of the school. He is approachable.
	We hear, "It's your idea, so figure out how to make it work."	Need psychological safety.	Need consistent policies on campus and district-wide.
	We only hear from administration when we're in trouble.	Need Self-Care Initiative, Reflection = Daily Chime	Need more feedback from observations.
	We need processes.	Different cultures within different departments.	Department of One's - need support, departmental meetings, and sense of community.
10-Confidence	I grew into being a leader. I developed into my confidence. I didn't see myself as a leader.	Fear of overstepping boundaries.	I feel like I would not be supported. I would be turned down.
	I'm good at what I do.	Don't want to be bossy-sounding.	Cautious, hesitant to offer advice, can be intimidated.
	I make decisions, but I also know when I need to ask.	Creating instruction guide increased knowledge and confidence.	Fear of criticism, fear of failure, fear of other teachers, sometimes.
	I believe in my heart, I could teach every lesson from K to AP Calculus.	Teachers can be perceived poorly if they try to lead something.	Fear of administration - Administration is intimidating. It's scary to go to the top with an idea.
	I am a role model and mentor. I am a decision-maker.	Need psychological safety.	Need to learn to trust my voice, trust the process.
	People might have the potential in them, and just not know they're good enough to do it. And to realize what an impact they make.	Hard here, because you don't want to come off as that you're better than…that you think you're better than anybody else.	Lots of administration, coaches, and consultants to please.
	I thrive on chaos. I am an active leader.	I bring experience.	Don't want to be perceived as a know-it-all or better-than-others.

	I hesitate to offer help in things I'm good at.	As a new teacher, I was in survival mode. Kept my head down, just try to get the job done.	Uncomfortable leading a 20-year veteran, but that 20-year veteran may not want to lead. Conundrum.
	I tend to chase after things if I'm confident in it.	Early Years - Didn't feel safe or confident.	I can be intimidated.
	As a newbie, I didn't do the committees because I was a young teacher. I didn't feel like I had anything to say. I felt like you had to have a couple years on you before people take you seriously.	Too new. Would be presumptuous to take those leadership positions.	District PD - Didn't know where to sit, didn't know anybody.
	I don't want to make waves.	Only been here 4 years (but teaching for decades).	District PD - Best thing, after I got over my fear.
	I did not feel safe enough, or confident enough to really approach. I think I knew exactly where the lines were in our school. I knew where my place was. I never tried to go out of my comfort zone. So I just put my head down and just did good work.	Previous school - led PD, but not here (new here, but decades teaching experience).	One-on-one, I can do anything you want me to do.
	I don't want to step on anybody's toes. I don't want to rock the boat. I'll just stay here. I'm good.	"I'm new here." (But they've been here 4 years and have been teaching for decades!). Missed opportunity.	Lost years - I was not as transparent, not brave or curious enough, didn't trust my decisions.
11-Collaboration	Every building is an island.	Need improved collaboration, don't have it now.	No current collaboration outside my content area.
	Teachers come to me.	Need more collaboration with teachers in all grade levels.	Need more campus-to-campus collaboration.
	There's probably a lot of people here, and I don't get to visit with them because of the daily design. They probably have a lot of innovative ideas.	Interaction is an informal way to lead.	District collaboration - there is friction, rivalry, separation, & unnecessary competition between campuses.
	People come to me.	Keep District PD - it's fun, you see people you won't see the rest of the year.	Campuses should work together, stop competing.
	Each campus is its own little island. We don't do well as a District.	More collaboration would be helpful.	Vertical Alignment - There's a Blame Game Culture (teachers asking "What are they doing in the lower grades, if kids can't read?").
	I've never had a K-12 conversation.	Middle School Academy - good collaboration. Wish we could do this every day.	Vertical Alignment - Need K-12 Leadership Team Need K-12 Content Mtgs.
	Our job is to be better, and our job is to understand what's going on in other classes.	Only collaborate in PLC. Outside of PLC, really hard to do it.	Vertical Alignment - I'm interested in what they've got to say.
	When we all do our jobs, we build together.	Teachers come to me. I don't proactively offer help.	Learn from other teachers. Teachers need to observe teachers.
	I'm curious to know other teachers' approaches.	Meetings - we want to learn something. There is 100% attendance when we learn things.	New teachers - they need veteran teachers; Pair new teachers with a mentor.
	If there's a district-level culture, I would not be aware of it.	Need departmental days.	
12-ASK	I didn't know the process. I asked.	Ask teachers to lead something.	Opportunities are assigned. Can't volunteer.

	I would volunteer, (but) administration selects - they pick you.		Got volunteered for all committees participation.
	Opportunities…maybe invites go to other people, maybe I'm not one of those people on that list.	Ask for input.	Invite teachers to participate.
	Do I need to initiate?	Not the type to volunteer, but will do it if asked.	Invite. Ask opinions. Listen. Solicit feedback.
	"If you're not invited to the leadership meetings, you don't really have a lot of avenues (for engagement)."	Ask in plenty of time - Received an email about leading PD, but deadline was the next week.	I'm involved because they asked.
	I got asked.	Wishing to be on a committee, but haven't volunteered.	Administration comes to me and asks my opinion.
	I would. I have not been asked to, but I would (on mentoring).	Admin selects participants.	Administration seeks out people to appoint to committees.
	They haven't invited anyone else to be on the committees.	We weren't asked.	
	When major decisions are made at our school, they don't ask a teacher.	Lead PD? I've never been asked.	Some people who actually want to do things may be overlooked
	I'm not the first one that gets asked. That's just not how it is.	I help others when I am asked.	Same people over and over.
	Not that I wouldn't do it, if I was asked (on leadership).	We're the ones in the trenches. We're the ones with the information.	Haven't gotten an opportunity to give advice on policies.
	I know they ask people to serve on committees from time to time about different aspects…but it's not real often.	I got volunteered for it. Then I stayed with it. Now I'm the head of it. I enjoy it. It's really worthwhile.	People are assigned to committees. Committees are the same people over and over.

Appendix J

Key Themes Matrix - Teacher of the Year (TOY) Focus Groups

Key Theme	Quotes	Ideas	Other Perceptions
1-Teacher Voice	TOYs can be a voice for other teachers.	Take our ideas seriously, get our input.	Not be afraid to say what you think.
	You have knowledge, but you don't want to push it.	Include teachers in programs	Some teachers are scared to talk to administration.
	It would be nice, whether on your own campus or whatever, if there were - not just Teacher of the Year - but other teachers were involved in some of the decision-making and things that go on that we're like, "Did anybody really think about that?"	Expand leadership teams - include classroom teachers and include wider variety of voices.	Prefer to be chosen by peers (more teacher voice). Some were given big display, others told privately.
	Include teachers who are in the trenches and working with kids all the time. Have input with (new programs). It seems like we jump with both feet every couple years into some new program. The buck stops with us, we have kids to take care of, parents to take care of, we're the ones right there, stuck in the middle, we know what's going on in our classroom, if we had some input into some of the new programs coming in, it might make us feel a little better, at least.	TOYs as mediators and advocates for teachers - a voice for teachers.	Some teachers are afraid to say what they think to administration.
	Teaching in isolation, you feel like there's no voice, there's no connection.	We're not venting, we're advocating.	Take our recommendations seriously.
	The majority of decisions made in education don't always come from the teachers, but the teachers are in the trenches, so we know best how to move the needle. We don't always get it right, but we're hands on…we don't need a state exam to know this kid is not proficient, we can tell you that they've struggled all year long.	TOYs can help facilitate communication between teachers and administration.	Let teachers be transparent and really share with administration their perceptions.
	Maybe not have the administrators in the meeting. We may be that voice that could say it. I hear what others have to say. We might be that voice that could say it without being judged for saying it. We hear it.		Teachers would be willing participants of a Leadership Team. More voices heard.
	I don't want to cause friction.		
2-Collaboration	There are some days I don't even see an adult.	Want leadership teams across the disciplines.	Sometimes you feel like you are teaching in isolation.
	I don't know that you could step it up more than we already do in our department, we meet together almost daily.	Open to doing things as a group	TOYS have never gotten together as a group before.
	You've got to have a cohesive team, you need everybody together.		A "Department of One" can be a challenge.
	I always felt like I was on an island. Where do I go when I don't know? Who do I bounce ideas off of?	Desire mobility between classrooms to watch, see, and observe.	Would like an opportunity for teachers to talk together without administration present.
	I love going to sit in (another teacher's) classroom.		
3- Campus-to-Campus Interaction	There's a lack of wanting to work together. Each school is seen as a separate school, and we should all be working together.	More district PD	I never thought beyond my campus.

	Each campus is its own island…all of us get to see each other opening day in August, and then, we're off, it's done, we don't see them, we just don't. We don't get a chance to collaborate as a whole district at all, and I wish that could be different. Like a PD day where we can all be together. But we don't. It does feel separate.	TOYs facilitating cross-campus collaboration.	Being a TOY makes you think more broadly.
	Getting all the voices on board. What are you seeing in K-2, or K-3 that might help somebody with 4-6, so by the time they get there, this is where instruction left off, and this is where we will pick it up.	More communication between campuses.	Vertical Alignment - need integration & alignment of all grade levels K-12.
	Bring other grades into the fold.	It feels separate.	Idea: District Roundtable
	We don't ever meet with (other campuses).		
	It's almost like a competition from campus to campus.		
4-Relationships	I didn't feel like I knew anyone.	Need sense of community.	Peer and student comments are meaningful.
	I don't know any of these people, and we will be working together.	Need positivity,	Get caught up and forget about impact on others.
	I wish we could have a little bit more relationship with other campuses.	Relationship-building - this is an area that is missing.	Would like interaction with other grade-level teachers.
	We're together but separate.	Only know the other TOYs on my same campus - don't know the others.	Need positivity - other teachers feed of you, just like students do.
	You don't ever see others. You don't have an opportunity.		
5-Empowerment	Made me think about there being another level of education I had never taped into, I never thought beyond my discipline, just keep your head down.	Transfer TOY to the following year (named at the conclusion of year, feels like an end instead of a beginning).	Being a TOY encouraged me to think expansively and broadly.
	When you get told to stay in your lane.	Fear inhibits empowerment.	Being a TOY led to committee involvement.
	I try to do it and hope that some of the newer, younger teachers might accidentally notice…not as TOY, but I just try to do what I feel works best with my kids and hope that if it would help someone else, that they would pick it up.	{Being a TOY} did not necessarily impact my capacity to influence beyond my campus.	You mind your own business, you keep your head down, you do your work, you don't think anyone is paying attention to you.
	{Being TOY makes me} step it up a lot.	Modeling.	
	I initiated helping others when I didn't before.	Being named TOY helps with innovation and creativity in professional realm.	Being a TOY expanded some teachers' influence, but not all.
	I'm not afraid to ask anymore.	I close my door.	Reflecting on how I teach.
	Being named TOY was affirmation for what I was doing in the classroom. Personally, it was very rewarding.		

6-New Teacher Mentoring	Being TOY gave me the confidence to go (new teachers) and say "Hey, do you need help?" I'm very comfortable going to a Newbie and saying, "Here I am, what do you need?"	Need better new teacher training.	Need system for new teachers to observe, watch, and work with veteran teachers.
	Encourage them, put them out there (new teachers), and you give them the confidence to know it's okay to not be okay.	Pair new teachers with veteran teachers.	New teachers are almost thrown to the wolves their 1st year.
	If we just had a faculty meeting and asked (new teachers), "What are you struggling with? What do you need help with?"	Ask new teachers what are you struggling with?	Current mentoring program could be improved.
	I don't ever mind having a new teacher come watch me teach. I invite them to just come watch.	TOYs could mentor new teachers.	
7-Appreciation	We want to come to work when we feel good at work. Students want to come to school and learn when they feel good about themselves and they feel important. Leadership has a great influence on the morale and climate for the whole setting.	TOYS can be positive and encouraging to others.	Need affirmation. We're in the grind.
	I lose focus of the impact I'm making. That others saw that in me that I really didn't see at the time	Be kind.	Honored, surprised, undeserving, brought tears to my eyes.
	Sometimes defeat or feeling like I'm by myself and I'm on an island, shields itself as an act of compliance. I go in there, I close my door, and I do the best job I can do, but at 3:30 or 4:00, I'm going to walk out…we are the best at being the teacher that goes in and closes the door…I don't want to cause that friction…there's no voice, there's no connection.	Morale gets crazy.	Being a TOY brought increased meaningfulness, motivation, affirmation, and confidence.
	Leadership has a lot to do with our morale with our faculty and students. They have a lot of influence on it.	Teachers are in the trenches every day.	Need more positivity, be positive.
	(Being named TOY), I felt affirmed that my work was worthwhile, and the effort was being recognized, and that I was growing professionally.		{Being a TOY} brought validation from the community.
8-Communication	Us (as TOYs) being able to say (to administration), "This is what I hear." I sit at lunch and hear what others have to say. We might be that voice that could say it without being judged. We hear it.	TOYS as advocates for peers.	Some teachers are afraid to stand up and say things to administration.
	I'll go mention things to principals that maybe somebody younger wouldn't. It would be nice if we had an ability for the teachers together to sit down and mention our concerns.	If I go to administration, I am advocating, not venting.	Maybe not have administration in the teachers' meeting.
	I don't think they (administration) realize it. Because people don't say it, we may just say it in a text group, they have no idea it's being said. You can't fix what you don't know.	TOYs could lead communication between campuses.	TOYs as mediators between teachers & administration.
	When you've been told to stay in your own lane, it's not conducive for teachers to individually go (to administrators) with problems or concerns.	Where do I go when I don't know?	Social media helps community awareness for TOYs.
	The climate we're in, it doesn't give itself to, "Come on and tell us…" It's not like that. There's so much pressure. Some of us are dog tired, but it would be nice if we could just go (to administration) and say what's happening, but would it be held against me because I said it? Who wants to rock that boat like that? We just hope someone will see, "Oh, that's a good idea," and they'll come and ask. It's safer.	Don't want to create a wall or fence between you & administration.	Major lack of communication district-wide from campus-to-campus. TOYs can foster connections across campuses.
	TOYs are not afraid to go to administration. Some people are afraid to go to administration and say what they think.	TOYs as a Voice for all Teachers	TOYs as new teacher mentors.

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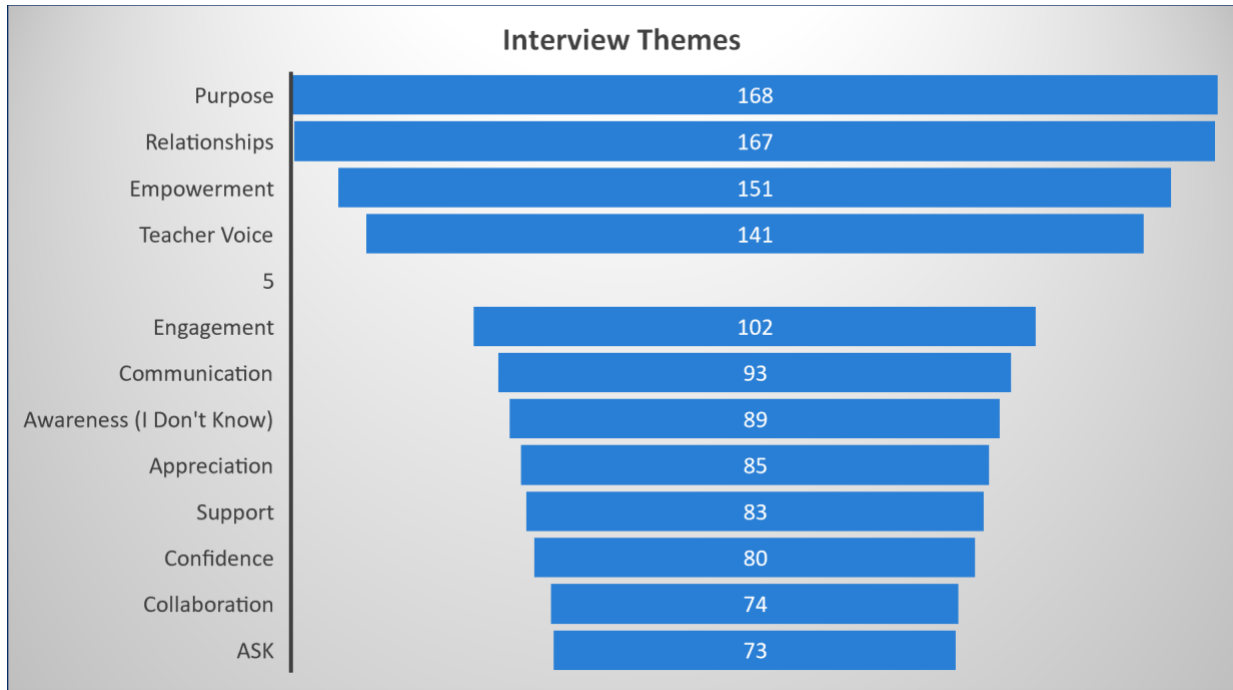
Appendix K
Key Themes Matrix - Survey Open-Responses

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Key Themes	Quote	Idea	Other Perceptions
1-Collaboration	Meaningful relationships build positive culture.	Teamwork & Team-Building	Common Planning Period & PLC - helpful, very popular, keep it.
	Want time to connect, collaborate, and create.	Peer Observations	Want Leadership Team with teachers & staff (not just admin & department leaders)
	We have the people.	Mentorships / Buddy Teachers	Feel isolated.
	Need more and new people - it's the same people over and over again.	Want Leadership	Build the community-school relationship.
	See the hurdles others have to jump over.		Keep district-wide meetings (popular).
2-Voice	Teachers have no say, even in small decisions.	Need a Teacher Leadership Team.	Feel opinion is worthless.
	Teachers need to have a say in district policies.	Need a Leadership Committee.	Underutilized potential.
	Listen to teachers instead of force-feed them what they are expected to do.	Need more leadership opportunities within departments (for teacher voice). Have more than just the Chairman.	Invite all to contribute ideas.
3-Empowerment	Wish we knew about plans as a faculty.	Provide autonomy in teaching methods.	(Consultants) don't want anything but nods and smiles.
	(I get told to) "stay in your lane."	Curriculum coaches - help	Stop micro-managing.
	I have a lot of ideas and desire to take on more leadership opportunities, but I feel stuck in my current position.	Bring the Happy back in school. The fun. The trust.	Feel oppressed, stuck, drowning.
4-Communication	Don't have a clue what is going on around campus.	Not emails. Want face-to-face meetings.	Stop mass emailing as the sole form of communication.
	Teachers are scrambling (administration have more forethought in planning).	More opportunities to share with faculty what is going on at our school.	More feedback from observations - want administration in my classroom
	Little to no active communication occurs within my school.	Communication in advance.	
5-Ideas	Gain new ideas and perspectives instead of spinning our wheels.	Need a district-wide volunteer committee for district improvement.	Superintendent's open-door policy is popular.
	Want a dedicated position to facilitate and support teacher ideas, involvement, and resources. If position not possible, assign to principal or assistant principal.	Consultants - they consider different opinions as negative.	Keep the approachability of administration.
6-Engagement	Administration pre-selects.	Grade-subject chairs should rotate	Keep District PD engagement
	Little correspondence about opportunities for leadership (engagement).	Desire to feel involved.	
7-Vertical Alignment	District-wide focus on best practices is good.	Need leaders in all content areas.	Need consistency in methods.
	Need meetings structured around the continuum of grade levels.	Awareness of campus activity, methods, grade-levels, and structures.	Need a district-wide volunteer committee for district improvement.

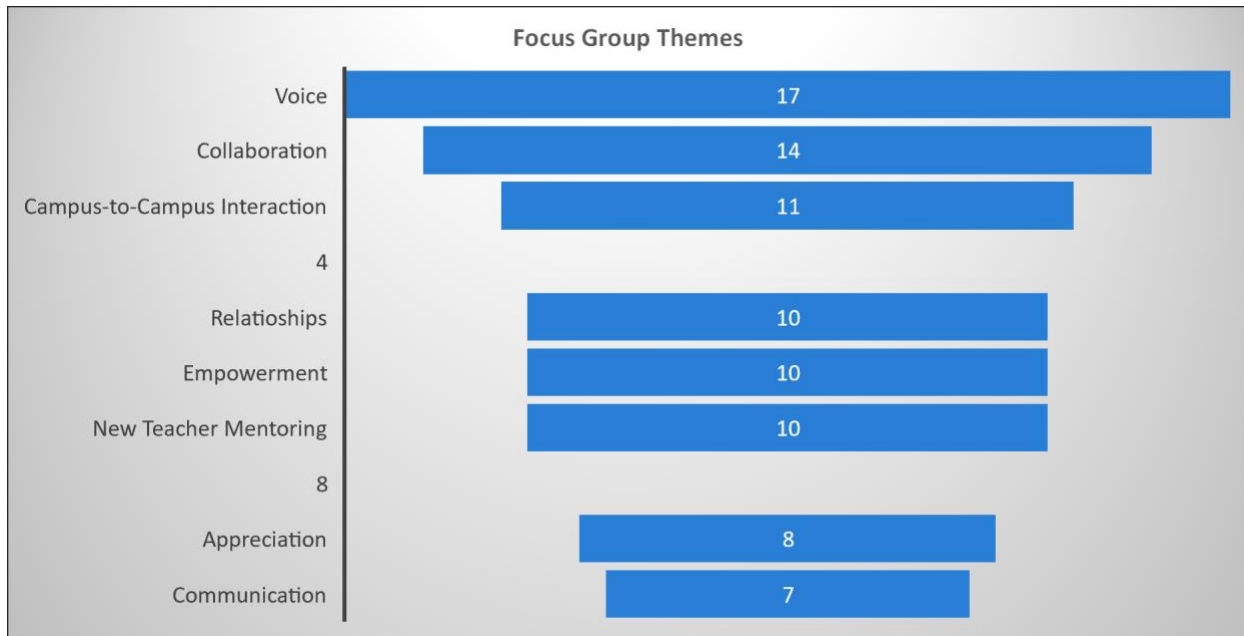|		District meeting is good.	Put curriculum coordinators on all campuses.
8-Meetings	Stop the divide-and-conquer mentality of keeping teachers apart in meetings.	Content meetings are meaningful. Emails can be good.	Department meetings - critical for morale.
9-Decision-Making	It's the same people doing district decision-making, especially hiring, need new people.	3-year "new policy" rule - Give all new programs 3 years to work.	Lack of forethought in planning.
	(Need) district planning decision-making participation.	It's their way, not ours.	Don't dictate.
10-New Teacher Mentoring	New teachers have no voice, ideas aren't viewed as worthy.	Need new teacher mentor programs.	Need Buddy Teacher System
11-PD	Use the talent in the district.	Want PD from teachers outside my school in my field.	District PD - Very popular, very good.
	Keep PD that is encouraging and meaningful.		PD - Stop forcing teachers to go to non-content area.
12-Appreciation	Only once in my years have I been complimented by a building-level administrator.	Praise teachers. Doesn't take much to please us teachers.	Feel discouraged and lost.
13-Campus-to-Campus Collaboration	I like getting to see and interact with people from other campuses.	Need more campus-to-campus collaboration.	District Meeting - all campuses, this is appreciated

Key Themes in Qualitative Instruments (Interview, Focus Group, Survey Open-Response)

Interviews - 12 Key Themes

Teacher of the Year Focus Groups - 8 Key Themes

Survey Open-Response - 13 Key Themes

Survey Themes - Open Response

Theme	Value
Collaboration	29
Voice	28
3	
Empowerment	22
Communication	19
Ideas	18
Engagement	17
8	
Vertical Alignment	15
Meetings	14
Decision-Making	12
New Teacher Mentoring	11
PD	11
Appreciation	11
Campus-to-Campus Collab	10