

## CHAPTER ONE

# Introduction to Teacher Leadership

*There is significant progress being made in teacher leadership during the early years of the new century. (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 123)*

*States and local jurisdictions increasingly recognize teacher leadership as a strong and pervasive trend. (Clemson-Ingram & Fessler, 1997, p. 104)*

**F**or the last quarter century, the nation has witnessed a nearly unbroken chain of initiatives to reform the American PreK–12 educational system. These interventions have been germinated in a wide variety of ideological seedbeds. They have emerged in response to powerful changes underway in the larger economic, political, and social environments in which the schooling enterprise is nested. They have been undertaken to solve an assortment of problems and to meet a wide array of important objectives.

One significant line of work to strengthen our nation's schools emphasizes teachers assuming greater leadership of the organizations in which they work, or what has come to be known as teacher leadership. While teacher leadership in America's schools is not yet "a broadly accepted norm" (Urbanski & Nickolaou, 1997, p. 243) and while "teachers, in general, do not share a tradition of leadership" (Sherrill, 1999, p. 59), during the last 20 years "teacher

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leadership has become an established feature of educational reform in the United States” (Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2002, p. 162). As we explain below, it differs from other improvement efforts in important ways, especially in the theory in action or reform engine that powers the reform. It varies in another critical way as well. Unlike many other reform endeavors, such as charter schools or school-based management, teacher leadership is often an embedded concept, one that appears as a defining strand in a larger reform effort rather than as a distinct strategy.

This book is designed to help the reader fully comprehend teacher leadership as a pathway to school improvement. Our jumping-off point is Snell and Swanson’s (2000) observation that what is required in the field of “teacher leadership is a broader conceptualization of this phenomenon” (p. 3)—that “concerted efforts for the explication of conceptual underpinnings, implementation processes, and evaluation strategies are needed to make teacher leadership a genuine reform initiative, rather than another fad in the history of educational reform” (Yarger & Lee, 1994, p. 235). We also concur with Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, and Hann (2002) that a “massive” amount of work is required in “exploring the meaning of teacher leadership” (p. 18).

We are not salespersons for teacher leadership. Rather, it is our intention to examine the teacher leadership phenomenon and explore how it can function as one—albeit an important—piece of equipment in the school improvement toolbox. By necessity, at times we assume a critical stance, exposing flaws in the formulation of the initiative and pointing out how, regardless of the health of the reform model itself, the environment sometimes provides only limited support for that potential to thrive.

In this introductory chapter, we undertake two broad assignments. We explore prevailing concepts of leadership that often hinder the development of teacher leadership in schools. We also make our first pass at uncovering the meaning of this emerging construct. In Chapter 2, we investigate the impetus for the emergence of teacher leadership on the reform landscape. Chapter 3 focuses the analytic spotlight on the theory in action or reform engine that is powering the teacher leadership movement. After unpacking and describing the pieces and elements of teacher leadership, Chapter 4 presents a comprehensive model of this change strategy. Chapter 5 addresses methods to operationalize

teacher leadership, moving from earlier and more discrete ideas (e.g., creating new roles) to later, more integrated and comprehensive formulations (e.g., reconfiguring the school as a learning community). Chapters 6 through 8 focus on getting the context right for teacher leadership to flourish. Overcoming organizational and professional dynamics that act as a drag on the change work is the purview of Chapter 6. Chapter 7 explores the critical role of the principal in helping teacher leadership take root and mature at the school level. It also offers strategies to help teachers and principals create productive relationships in the service of deepening the pool of leadership. Chapter 8 analyzes the significance of professional development for school staff in bringing alternative formulations and models of leadership to life. In the final chapter, we rescrub all the information to explore concerns that transect the teacher leadership movement. One lens is directed toward problems while a second is focused on the goal of reinforcing the architecture supporting teacher leadership.

## **THE STARTING GATE**

In the literature on educational leadership little attention is given to the teacher as an educational leader in the school other than in the classroom. (Brownlee, 1979, p. 119)

The assumption has been that teaching is for teachers and leading is for administrators and managers of schools. (Lynch & Strodl, 1991, p. 2)

It is instructive to begin our analysis with a clear understanding of traditional perspectives and models of leadership in general and leadership in schools in particular—and to see how teacher leadership intersects with this work. Specifically, we start with the knowledge that throughout most of the last century, with its focus on hierarchical forms and institutional dynamics, “leadership has tended to be constructed as associated with ascribed authority and position” (Crowther & Olsen, 1997, p. 6): “leadership traditionally has been perceived to reside with school administrators where power flowed downward to teachers” (Yarger & Lee, 1994, p. 226). On the schooling scene, this has meant that (1) educational

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leadership has been defined in “hierarchical and positional conceptions” (Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, & Cobb, 1995, p. 103), in terms of roles and the “positional authority” (Crowther, 1997, p. 5) of principals and superintendents; (2) “the system has not been organized to treat teachers as leaders” (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2001, p. 3); and (3) the leadership literature, in turn, “has focused almost entirely on those in formal school leadership positions” (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, n.d., p. 7). These understandings gave rise to views of leadership that were tightly connected to domains of responsibility, with the assignment of “school-wide leadership to principals and classroom leadership roles to teachers” (Clift, Johnson, Holland, & Veal, 1992, p. 878; Crowther et al., 2002).

The significant point here is not that teachers were unconnected to leadership but that such leadership was rarely acknowledged outside the realm of the classroom, teachers’ role-based field of authority and influence as traditionally defined (Barth, 1988a). Because the work of teachers in terms of role and authority “has been seen as being composed of interactions with students in classes” (Griffin, 1995, p. 30), the expectation has been hardwired into the structure and culture of schools “that the only job of teachers is to teach students and to consider the classroom, at best, as the legitimate extent of their influence” (Urbanski & Nickolaou, 1997, p. 244). “The formal authority of teachers in schools remains carefully circumscribed. They exert extensive control over teaching in their classrooms and departments, but their formal influence rarely extends beyond that” (Johnson, 1989, p. 105).

This preoccupation with the hierarchical organizational system with its tenets of separation of management (leadership) from labor, chain of command, and positional authority has led to the crystallization of (1) forms of schooling in which “teachers are routed into traditional roles” (Kowalski, 1995, p. 247) and “teacher leadership is clearly not a common contemporary condition” (Barth, 1988b, p. 134)—models in which “few people have viewed these educators as a group in the same way as other leaders, i.e., principals” (Hatfield, Blackman, & Claypool, 1986, p. 20); and (2) a profession in which “teachers, even those who are already leaders, do not see themselves as leaders” (Hart & Baptist, 1996, p. 87). As a consequence, “there are almost no mechanisms by which teachers can emerge as leaders for the

purposes of leading work on teaching, even when they have been acknowledged as exemplary classroom teachers” (Little, 1987, p. 510). Thus teachers are forced into “dependent roles” (Creighton, 1997, p. 5).

Not surprisingly, teachers have generally not been featured in school reform initiatives, except in the “cog-in-the-wheel role” (Griffin, 1995, p. 30) of implementing policy from above. They have been afforded very limited “opportunit[ies] to effect policy or restructure schools” (Manthei, 1992, p. 15; Lynch & Strodl, 1991) or to “participate in decision making about school improvement” (Wasley, 1991, p. 3)—“to effect meaningful change outside their classrooms or departments” (Johnson, 1989, p. 104). While the need for leadership has been a central ingredient in the school change and school improvement literature, consistent with the analysis above, historically that leadership has been associated with those in roles with positional authority over teachers (Heller & Firestone, 1994; Leithwood, Jantzi, Ryan, & Steinbach, 1997; Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2002). Indeed, it is proposed that much of the reform activity of the last quarter century has actually solidified the traditional roles of administrators as leaders and teachers as followers (Crowther, 1997).

The theme of teacher leadership as a “seriously underdeveloped topic” (Crowther & Olsen, 1997, p. 6), both conceptually and in practice, is ribboned throughout this book. So too are analyses of the costs to the educational system and to teachers of the overreliance “on the accepted body of thought on educational leadership” (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 23) and prevailing models of schools as hierarchical organizations, especially theories that originate in the corporate and managerial system. We proceed from Suleiman and Moore’s (1997) position that “the false assumption that teaching is for teachers and leading is for administrators has operated to the inutility of the public schools for a long time” (p. 6), that the sole emphasis on formal school leaders “at the center of educational leadership is ill directed” (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 49) and has real costs in terms of schooling outcomes.

We commence also from the proposition that “teacher leadership is essential to change and improvement in a school” (Whitaker, 1995, p. 76; Killion, 1996), that “genuine, long-lasting school change initiatives must derive from and involve teachers” (Kelley, 1994, p. 300), and that without teachers’ “full participation and leadership, any move to reform education—no matter how

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well-intentioned or ambitious—is doomed to failure” (Lieberman & Miller, 1999, p. xi). In short, we argue for the necessity of challenging the underlying assumptions about existing roles for teachers and school administrators (Barth, 2001; Foster & Suddards, 1999; Rallis, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1991a, 1991b).

The scaffolding on which we construct our understanding of leadership is forged from “multiple sources and persons” (Crowther, 1997, p. 7). It arises in part from the stockpile of material on leadership roles but is inclusive of more than traditional administrative roles (Miller, 1992). That is, we advance beyond the view of “educational leadership as the domain of either a particular stratum of the educational system or the individuals within that stratum” (Crowther, 1997, p. 6). Our scaffolding is also erected, however, from our best understandings of leadership as (1) an organizational property, (2) a function or process, (3) an outgrowth of expertise, (4) an activity of a group, and (5) a dynamic of community, understandings that move us away from what O’Hair and Reitzug (1997) label “conventional leadership” (p. 65) and that permit the concept of teacher leadership to be positioned on center stage in the leadership play—insights that promote “a new type of leadership” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 82) or “a new paradigm of leadership—one that recognizes the central place of teachers” (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 27).

### **DEFINITIONAL ISSUES**

The issue of teacher leadership is devilishly complicated. And it doesn’t help matters that the phrase itself is frustratingly ambiguous. (Wigginton, 1992, p. 167)

Even now, we are a long way from a common understanding of teacher leadership. Confusion about definitions . . . abound. (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, pp. 4–5)

### **An Organizational Focus**

There are almost no mechanisms by which teachers can emerge as leaders for purposes of leading work on teaching, even when they have been acknowledged as exemplary classroom teachers. (Little, 1987, p. 510)

Analysts emphasize either a “two-level concept” (Keedy, 1999, p. 787; Strodl, 1992) or a three-tiered model of teacher leadership (Murphy, 1991). Specifically, leadership can be linked to influence in three broad domains or “zones” (Ingersoll, 1996, p. 162): autonomy of teachers in their classrooms, the ability to shape school policies and practices, and control of the machinery of the profession writ large (e.g., licensure, certification) (Ingersoll, 1996; McCarthy & Peterson, 1989; Sizer, 1984). Leadership in each zone is seen somewhat differently; for example, it is often asserted that “teaching children and adolescents is quite different from leading and coaching teachers” (Berry & Ginsberg, 1990, p. 618).

While, by necessity, we touch on activity in zone one above, the focus of this book is on teacher leadership beyond the classroom, primarily at the school level. Our attention here does not gainsay the fact that “a classroom including a group of students and their class teacher is in itself a small social organization” (Cheng, 1994, p. 54), nor does it deny the importance of teacher leadership in classrooms (Berliner, 1986). Indeed, considerable effort has been devoted to describing student-based teacher leadership (see, for example, Cheng, 1994; Larkin, 1973; Reinoso, 2002; Vertiz, Fortune, & Hutson, 1985). Rather, it is simply an acknowledgment that our charge is to explore what is known about teacher leadership activities in the larger organization in which they work.

## **Newness**

To make matters more complicated, teacher leadership is a fairly recent phenomenon. (Yarger & Lee, 1994, p. 233)

As we concentrate on the nature of teacher leadership beyond the classroom, certain inescapable conclusions emerge. To begin with, we find that teacher leadership defined in this way is a relatively new idea “in both research and practice circles” (Lieberman, 1992, p. 160). Certainly, prior to 1985 it is a difficult theme to observe, even employing powerful analytic lenses; “teaching and leadership [had] not been dealt with together much” (Lynch & Strodl, 1991, p. 2) before then. Indeed, given the overview in the previous section, one can see quite clearly why “the possibility that leadership might be a function of the work of teachers has only recently begun to be accorded serious consideration” (Crowther & Olsen, 1997, p. 7).

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Because scholarship in the area “has only begun to emerge” (Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan, 2000, p. 779), there is “no well-established body of literature” (Wasley, 1991, p. 9) on teacher leadership and consequently “not much is known” (Fay, 1992a, p. 4) about the concept. Thus, even while the idea appears to have “burst upon the scene” (Lieberman, 1992, p. 160) and is something of a “hot topic” (Smylie, 1996, p. 573; Boles & Troen, 1996) today, it is instructive to remember that teacher leadership outside the classroom has rather shallow roots.

### **An Element in School Reform Models**

The second wave of educational reform . . . raised interest in new roles that give teachers more leadership responsibility. (Heller & Firestone, 1994, p. 1)

As we touched on in the first section and re-emphasize here, teacher leadership initially rode into play on the back of various broad-based reform movements, for example, school-based management and professionalization (Murphy, 1990a). Thus, while the concept sometimes assumed the leading role, it has more often been a supporting actor. For example, it is one of a series of critical elements in most models of site-based decision making (Monson & Monson, 1993; Murphy & Beck, 1995; Smylie, 1995).

At the same time, the idea of teacher leadership is often “caught in the collision . . . between two strategies for achieving reform: one resting on heightened involvement and commitment of participants and one relying on intensified control of participants’ work” (Little, 1995, p. 50; Murphy, 1990a)—and more recently, we would add, the reliance on market forces to fuel improvement (Murphy, 1996, 1999, 2000c). It is also often difficult to tease out the extent to which teacher leadership is a causal variable in the school reform algorithm or a product of reform movements such as learning organizations and communities of practice.

### **Complexity**

I was struck . . . at how enormously complex teacher leadership roles are as they play out in practice. (Wasley, 1991, p. 154)

Contrary to much of the writing in this area, teacher leadership is not a simple concept. As a dimension of the larger dynamic of power redistribution in schools, it “is marked by substantial disagreement and confusion” (Ingersoll, 1996, p. 159). Teacher leadership positions are “full of problems and riddled with paradoxes” (Wasley, 1991, p. 155). And the more one moves from conceptual analysis to implementation—“to how teacher leadership roles play out in practice” (Wasley, 1991, p. 154)—the more visible this complexity becomes (Little, 1988).

Nesting teacher leadership within the plethora of changes required to bring it to life in schools only heightens the complexity (Manthei, 1992). Or to capture this idea in slightly different form, context is a critical variable here (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Little, 1995; Siskin, 1994). “The environment at the school and district” (Clemson-Ingram, 1997, p. 100) and state adds to both the richness of teacher leadership as well as the difficulty of neatly boxing up the concept (Kowalski, 1995).

Teacher leadership also means different things to different groups; for example, for teacher unions standing up for the rights of teachers as opposed to support-starved school principals looking for assistance in completing administrative tasks. There is also a good deal of within-group variability in how teacher leadership is portrayed; for example, for some teachers it is a path to career advancement while for others it is a vehicle to build professional community. It also varies depending on the reform vehicle to which it is attached; for example, as a dimension of school-based management versus an element of charter schools. Or as Miller, Moon, and Elko (2000) note, “teacher leadership is used widely among many different educational reform efforts” (p. 4). In a real sense, then, teacher leadership is like an evolving thread that appears in widely diverse locations and in a variety of shapes and colors in the school reform tapestry.

### **Definitions From the Literature**

Clearly the whole issue of defining teacher leadership is problematic. (Wasley, 1991, p. 147)

Donaldson (2001) observes that as “we seek to understand how leadership can function to improve schools, we are exploring

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what leadership means” (p. 5). Certainly a reasonable place to begin is with the definition of the concept in the spotlight. Because of some of the issues explored in the preceding section (e.g., complexity, newness, context) and because “the subject of teacher leadership is cloaked in ambiguity” (Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2002, p. 162), this is a less-than-straightforward task. Simply put, “variance makes it difficult to precisely define what is meant by the term ‘teacher leaders’” (Kowalski, 1995, p. 251).

Teacher leaders are marked by an assortment of different names—“names that mean different things in different settings and refer to a broad array of actions” (Miller et al., 2000, p. 5). This variety is compounded by the fact that “when educators speak or write of teacher leadership they rarely define what they mean” (O’Hair & Reitzug, 1997, p. 67). “Confusion about definitions . . . of teacher leaders abound” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, pp. 4–5) and “the roles of teacher leaders are often ill-defined and misunderstood” (Johnson & Hynes, 1997, p. 107). The consequence is, of course, a significant measure of “ambiguity surrounding the term in the literature” (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 5), the use of the term “without a clear definition of what it means” (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000, p. 28), and the near absence of “systematic conceptual definitions . . . of the variable in the [research] literature” (Smylie, 1996, p. 543). As Moller and Katzenmeyer (1996) remind us, the lack of anything approaching a “clear definition of teacher leadership also impedes its development” (p. 5) and results in “roles that remain ill defined and unclear to both researchers and teacher leaders” (Sherrill, 1999, p. 56; Fraser, 1991) themselves.

Acknowledging this reality, and the dynamics described above (e.g., complexity), it is still useful to uncover what existing efforts to define teacher leadership reveal, or fail to convey. We begin with a portrait of the broad array of “definitions of teacher leaders that abound in the literature” (LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997, p. 32)—13 to be exact—and then set about parsing out the critical elements found in that picture. We continue our quest to add conceptual depth to the construct of teacher leadership in Chapters 2 through 5 as well.

Teacher leaders, thus, are those teachers who influence the behavior of both students and adults in the school setting. (Brownlee, 1979, p. 120)

Teacher leaders were identified as those who reached out to others with encouragement, technical knowledge to solve classroom problems, and enthusiasm for learning new things. (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 208)

Teacher leadership is defined as influencing and engaging colleagues toward improved practice. (Wasley, 1992, p. 21)

A teacher leader is a practicing teacher, chosen by fellow faculty members to lead them in ways determined by the context of individual school needs, who has formal preparation and scheduled time for a leadership role which, to preserve the teacher mission, calls for neither managerial nor supervisory duties. (Fay, 1992a, p. 8)

Teacher leadership is concerned with teachers helping teachers so that teachers can, in turn, better help students. Teacher leadership is helping teachers work together to establish and achieve the goals and objectives of the school. (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995, p. 22)

We characterize teacher leaders as individuals who are actively involved in promoting change, effectively communicate with multiple constituents, possess a global understanding of school and district organizations, and continue to grow professionally. (Harrison & Lembeck, 1996, p. 102)

Our definition of teacher leadership proposes that teachers are leaders when they are contributing to school reform or student learning (within or beyond the classroom), influencing others to improve their professional practice, or identifying with and contributing to a community of leaders. (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996, p. 5)

A transforming relationship between teachers, administrators, community, and concerned others who intend real educational reform grounded in shared consensus coupled with successful classroom application and research. (Suleiman & Moore, 1997, p. 6)

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Teacher leadership is essentially an ethical stance that is based on views of both a better world and the power of teaching to shape meaning systems. It manifests in actions that involve the wider community and leads to the creation of new forms of understanding that will enhance the quality of life of the community in the long term. It reaches its potential in contexts where system and school structures are facilitative and supportive. (Crowther, 1997, p. 15)

Teacher leadership may be broadly defined as a professional commitment and a process which influences people to take joint actions toward changes and improved practices that enable achievement of shared educational goals and benefit the common good. (Forster, 1997, p. 88)

The concept of teacher leadership refers to a variety of roles for classroom teachers in staff development, management, and school improvement. (Clemson-Ingram, 1997, p. 95)

Teacher leadership includes: (a) modeling positive attitudes and enthusiasm; (b) devoting time to doing whatever it takes to make the school work better; (c) enhancing student learning through working with other teachers on improving pedagogy; and (d) being recognized, appreciated, respected, and/or valued for such efforts. (LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997, p. 33)

Teacher leadership generally refers to actions by teachers outside their own classrooms which involve an explicit or implicit responsibility to provide professional development to their colleagues, to influence their communities' or districts' policies, or to act as adjunct district staff to support changes in classroom practices among teachers. (Miller et al., 2000, p. 4)

### **Core Components**

Although different terms are used and different aspects of teacher leaders are emphasized, these definitions highlight some core components of teacher leadership. (Yarger & Lee, 1994, p. 227)

Teacher leadership is about action that transforms teaching and learning in a school, that ties school and community together on behalf of learning, and that advances social sustainability and quality of life for a community. (Crowther et al., 2002, p. xvii)

Leadership has historically been defined across two axes, one representing a sense of vision about where an organization should be headed and a second capturing the relational work required to move organizational participants toward that end. In the assorted definitions provided above, these properties are qualified by data on enabling conditions and by information on attempts to distinguish a particular pattern of leadership (i.e., teacher leadership) from school leadership in general.

Turning to the *sense of vision*, we see in the above definitions a focus on three valued goals. First, there are indications that teacher leadership will promote “social sustainability and quality of life in the school community” (Crowther et al., 2002, p. xvii), that the endgame is the creation of a community of practice and new forms of understanding in that community. Next, we discern the goal of change, change which is the pathway to school reform and to improvements in classroom practice and enhanced “instructional performance” (Hart, 1995, p. 21). Finally, there are references to the more tangible outcomes of goal attainment and enhanced student learning.

What we do not see much in play here is the sense that the vision for the school is the product of the teacher leaders themselves. The end states are generally presented as givens, either professionally or organizationally. In contrast to the larger literature on leadership, the role of the teacher leader in defining that vision is muted (Heller & Firestone, 1994), either because of his or her place as one among many in the professional community of practice or because outcomes are organizationally predetermined.

The *relational component* of these definitions also provides interesting similarities to and differences from the larger corpus of scholarship on leadership. As in the more extensive body of work, influence forms the heart of the teacher leadership model (Corbett & Rossman, n.d.). However, unlike most, but not all, of the work on leadership, in “assuming new relationships with administrators and colleagues” (Hynes, Summers, & Socoski, 1992, p. 43)

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that power is exercised more indirectly and in more subtle ways. The strong (e.g., directing, telling) and even partially muted (e.g., facilitating, guiding) action verbs often associated with leadership give way to still softer conceptions of influence (e.g., reaching out, encouraging, collaborating) (Yarger & Lee, 1994).

Interspersed throughout the assortment of definitions provided above are references to *enabling conditions*, including elements that distinguish teacher leadership from administrative leadership. Whereas references to position, formal training, legal authority, and organizational expertise pepper writings on managerial leadership, descriptions of pedagogical knowledge and collegiality anchor the literature on teacher leadership (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995; Fay, 1992a, 1992b; Yarger & Lee, 1994). The definitions presented above also offer a variety of conditions that provide an enabling environment for teacher leadership to take root while setting it apart from prevailing views of administrative leadership. For example, the beliefs that a teacher leader must be someone who (1) is a practicing teacher, not someone who has left the classroom; (2) works and has influence outside his or her classroom; (3) does not engage in managerial and supervisory activities; (4) is chosen by teacher colleagues; and (5) wields considerable autonomy in undertaking his or her work can all be found in the definitional mosaic provided earlier. While these are not universally accepted premises, they do represent a concerted effort to delineate a distinct storyline for teacher leadership in the larger leadership narrative.

### **An Evolving Concept**

To claim, as we have above, that the concept of teacher leadership outside the classroom is an emerging idea is not to gainsay the fact that teacher leadership as a general construct enjoys a long life (see Murphy & Beck, 1995; Smylie, 1995; Smylie & Denny, 1989); that is, in its broadest form it is hardly a “novel” (Livingston, 1992, p. 9; Hart, 1995) or a “new” (Suleiman & Moore, 1997, p. 2; Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992) idea. Indeed, as Gehrke (1991) discloses, “there have long been teacher leaders in schools” (p. 1). For example, teachers, as already observed, have always demonstrated considerable leadership in their individual classrooms (Crowther & Olsen, 1997). At the

school level, they have also exercised informal leadership “of all kinds” (Strodl, 1992, p. 8; Fay 1992a; Hatfield, 1989). Finally, while “beyond the walls of the classroom teacher leadership roles have been limited in scope” (Livingston, 1992, p. 9), teachers have assumed “limited formal leadership roles in schools and school districts” (Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992, p. 150).

What is at the heart of this book, however, are analyses of efforts to enrich teacher leadership beyond these perspectives, to acknowledge its legitimacy outside the classroom and to deepen it as an organizational construct beyond informal and administratively determined and hierarchically anchored roles. When we talk about teacher leadership as a new idea, we do so in reference to this movement. Important elements of this expanded understanding include enhancing the importance of the leadership dimensions of teachers’ work (Wasley, 1991); de-emphasizing “administrative prerogative” (Livingston, 1992, p. 9) in energizing teacher leadership (Suleiman & Moore, 1997); illuminating the educational dimensions, as opposed to the managerial aspects, of the work (Silva et al., 2000); highlighting “expanded visions of teacher leadership roles” (Smylie & Denny, 1989, p. 2); underscoring “substantially different working relationships among teachers and between teachers and administrators” (Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992, p. 151); featuring “the more global context of school change and improvement” (Stone, Horejs & Lomas, 1997, p. 60); and “plac[ing] teachers with administrators at the center of school and district decision making” (Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992, p. 151).

As we discuss more fully in later chapters, over the last 20 years we have witnessed the evolution of the idea of teacher leadership beyond the classroom through four overlapping phases, each of which features a relatively distinct footprint. The mid-1980s ushered in efforts to capture leadership for teachers by reshaping the structure of the school organization and the culture of the teaching profession, changing teaching from a single role to an assortment of differentiated assignments. Specifically, the period from the early to late 1980s saw the emergence of initiatives such as career ladders, differentiated teaching, mentor teaching plans, and performance-based compensation systems (Berry & Ginsberg, 1990; Yarger & Lee, 1994; Zimpher, 1988), interventions designed “to reconceptualize the nature of the teaching career” (Leithwood et al., 1997, p. 2). Not surprisingly,

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these early forays into teacher leadership were grafted onto the hierarchical organizational structure that had defined schooling for most of the 20th century and were grown from tenets of the centralized reform strategies in play at the time (Murphy, 1990a).

In the mid- to late 1980s, as empowerment ideology and decentralization strategies began to challenge the prevailing centralized perspectives on reform, a second strand of teacher leadership, this one featuring shared decision making and participatory governance, arrived on the educational scene (Murphy & Beck, 1995). This was supplemented by a third strain of teacher leadership, one in which new educationally anchored roles were created, “positions that capitalized on teacher instructional knowledge” (Silva et al., 2000, p. 780). The key point here is that these new opportunities moved teachers “away from management and toward pedagogical expertise” (p. 780).

Finally, with the development of community-grounded perspectives of schooling (e.g., schools as learning organizations), a frame for teacher leadership that highlighted not organizational roles or decision making responsibilities but the concept of a community of practice began to blossom. Leadership here was to be considered as a central element of the work of all teachers engaged in school improvement. Leadership was captured not in “hierarchical conceptions that slot[ted] individuals into different, limited functions that place[d] them in superordinate and subordinate relations to one another” (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995, p. 93), but in terms of “promoting the professionalization of all teachers” (Yarger & Lee, 1994, p. 227) and nurturing widespread collaboration (Silva et al., 2000).

## CONCLUSION

Teachers who lead leave their mark on teaching. By their presence and their performance, they change how other teachers think about, plan for, and conduct their work with students. (Little, 1988, p. 84)

In this chapter, we provided an initial snapshot of the concept known as teacher leadership. We were particularly interested in laying the foundation for later analysis. In that regard, we described

how emerging perspectives on teacher leadership represent a break with prevailing views of leadership built up around formal administrative roles. We also disclosed how these emerging understandings extend and deepen the types of leadership teachers have exerted in their classrooms and have enacted informally at the school level. We recounted how teacher leadership is both a catalyst for and an outcome of a shift away from a near-exclusive focus on hierarchical organizational systems and institutional views of schooling. We observed how teacher leadership draws energy from evolving perspectives on leadership as a function, a dynamic of community, and a product of pedagogical expertise.

We added to our foundation-building work by carefully parsing the concept of teacher leadership into prime elements. We described a three-tiered model of teacher leadership and explained that the focus in this book is primarily on activity at the school level. We noted that while the idea of teacher leadership enjoys a long history, attention to the domain of interest herein (i.e., leadership beyond the classroom) has only recently been afforded serious consideration. We divulged how the idea of teacher leadership has evolved over time and how it re-entered the school improvement narrative in the late 1980s as an element of sweeping school reform movements such as teacher professionalism and school-based management. We featured an assortment of commonly used definitions of teacher leadership and teased out core ingredients of those perspectives.

We close this chapter where we started. We begin by acknowledging that “both principal and teacher leadership have a significant influence on important features of the school” (Leithwood et al., 1997, p. 23). We then assert the need “to experiment with new organizational arrangements that offer new possibilities for improving the overall effectiveness of the teaching profession” (Whitaker, 1997, p. 15). Specifically, we honor the call “to look at teacher leadership carefully and critically” (Miller et al., 2000, p. 4), “to explore the importance of these previously under-recognized educational players” (Snell & Swanson, 2000, p. 2). To date, teacher leadership has not (1) “received much critical examination” (Brownlee, 1979, p. 120); (2) “been the subject of . . . deliberate attempts at analysis and development” (McCay, Flora, Hamilton, & Riley, 2001, p. 135); (3) been informed by work from a variety of “vantage points” (Smylie, 1995, p. 5); or

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(4) been marked by much “systematic inquiry” (Leithwood et al., 1997, p. 21). As a result, “many unanswered questions linger” (Whitaker, 1997, p. 5) about teacher leadership. In the remainder of this book, we surface some of these key questions and provide information that leads us in the direction of more robust understanding and informed action.