**Teacher Leadership Lab: “How-To” Guide and Toolkit**

***Background:*** The following description of a Teacher Leadership Lab is based on the U.S. Department of Education’s Teacher Leadership Labs held regionally following their national Teach to Lead Summits. Following each summit, one team’s teacher leadership project was chosen to host a Teacher Leadership Lab to promote regional interest and garner support for the project. For more information on the Teach to Lead initiative including information and tools for Leadership Labs, visit the [US Department of Education’s website](http://teachtolead.org).

***Purpose:*** The Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession’s version of the Teacher Leadership Labs are designed to be more discussion-focused than presentation-focused and to help both the host district and participants from other districts learn how to support and grow teacher leadership to improve a wide-range of outcomes for teachers and students in their districts.

***Components:*** The key pieces to the Lab are two fishbowl discussions. The first fishbowl discussion is for the members of the host district team to further explore and explain their idea and journey toward implementing their teacher leadership idea. It is helpful to precede this fishbowl by having the team give a short overview (10 min) of their project or idea. During this first fishbowl, participants from other districts and invited guests listen to the conversation and take notes.

Teacher Leadership Labs are intended to be a low-cost means for sharing ideas cross-districts. Attendance is by invitation and free to participants. Usually, the host district provides the venue for the Teacher Leadership Lab and can provide supplies for the and food/beverages for the event. It is helpful to procure sponsorship to pay for food when the host district is not in a position to provide this in their budget.

Ideal size is approximately 20-25 participants total, including the host-district team, which should not be larger than 5-8 people. Ideally, districts would attend as a team comprised of a teacher, principal and teacher leader in the building or district. Other members of the host district may attend and can be considered stakeholders or a part of the first fishbowl as connected to the work.

***Examples:*** To get a flavor for what the Leadership Labs do and are about, watch a short video from one of CSTP’s Leadership Labs in the Camas School District: <http://cstp-wa.org/teacher-leadership/leadership-lab/>

You can also read an article about the Leadership Lab in the Moses Lake School District: <http://www.columbiabasinherald.com/news/school_news/educators-gather-for-leadership-lab/article_13a6bcf4-c3c6-11e5-865c-7726834ac9f3.html>

**AGENDA TEMPLATE**

Teacher Leadership Lab

Sponsored by [Name of organization and school district]

[Time and Date]

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| --- | --- |
|  | **Activities/Objectives** |
| 30 min | Meet and Greet [Provide coffee & small breakfast snacks] |
| 15 min | Introduction and welcome participants   * Provide overarching perspective of the system that allowed for and supported teacher leadership * Orientation to the Day |
| 45 min | Fishbowl #1:   * Teacher leader participants from host district discuss successes and struggles of teacher leadership in the era of TPEP, prompted by questions from Fishbowl facilitator. * Stakeholder participants sit outside the Fishbowl and listen and take notes on what they hear and consider application in their own districts.   Participant Handout: Note Taking Guide Fishbowl #1  Facilitator embed a reflective write and partner share after fishbowl |
| 15 min | Break |
| 45 min | Fishbowl #2:   * Stakeholder participants discuss opportunities for next steps in the host district and in their own districts based on what they heard and in response to questions from Fishbowl facilitator. * Host district teacher leaders will listen and take notes on what they hear about growth opportunities and future application.   Participant Handout: Note Taking Guide Fishbowl #2  Facilitator embed a reflective write and partner share after fishbowl. |
| 45 min | Lunch and Q&A |
| 45 min | Break Out Discussion Groups:   * Everyone participates in job-alike groups in topical conversations and prepare to share out summary of conversation. * Questions are determined in advance, and groups are facilitated by participants from the host district.   Participant Handout: Note Taking Guide Job Alike Conversations |
| 30 min | Closure and Thank You   * Break out groups share key ideas from their discussion. * All participants complete an exit ticket commitment. * Follow-up might include a feedback survey or electronic check-in.   Participant Handout: Exit Ticket/ Commitment Sheet  *Collect the sheets and share them with the participants electronically after the event.* |

**ORGANIZER AND FACILITATOR GUIDE**

*Before the Lab:*

* Determine who from the host district team will serve as the point of contact for the Teacher Leadership Lab.
* Establish goals/outcomes for the host district and for participants. Determine Problem of Practice to be shared with participants
* Set the specifics of the agenda and establish questions for the fishbowl and breakout discussions.
* Set up registration for participants, indicate if sub is needed.
* Host team members determine which team member will answer which question in Fishbowl #1. Share this with the facilitator.
* Request that host district team members facilitate Job Alike conversations.
* Coordinate logistics (supplies, food, space, clock hours, sign in sheets, etc).
* Publicize the event and collect RSVPs from guests/neighboring districts.
* Send final logistics email to all participants (location, time, clock hour, send sub form to those that requested form)
* Make all participant copies
  + Team stipend forms
  + Sub reimbursement sheets for team and for participants
  + Note Taking Guide Fishbowl #1 (embed with Problem of Practice and questions from District)
  + Note Taking Guide Fishbowl #2
  + Note Taking Guide Job Alike Conversations
  + Exit Ticket/Commitment Sheet

*Day of the Lab:*

* Set up registration table.
* Set up room Circle of chairs in center for team members and facilitator; participants on the outside of the circle at tables.
* Greet participants & mingle over coffee.
* Provide opening remarks (including review of the goals, agenda, any handouts) and introduce host district team.
* Facilitate both rounds of fishbowl conversations.
* Ensure time for participant reflection and writing after fishbowls, or turn and talk
* Manage and facilitate the agenda in response to the on-the-moment needs of the group.
* Facilitate the breakout sharing.
* Provide closing reflection activity (exit ticket/ commitment sheet)

*After the Lab:*

* Follow-up with attending districts to garner their feedback and check in on what they have implemented or discussed with their colleagues.
* Thank the host district.
* Write report – share findings. (Exit Ticket/Commitment Sheet)

**Potential Questions for Fishbowl #1**

*Consider the following questions as a starting point for developing your own questions. Questions should yield conversation, be genuine and responsive to the specific context in which the lab is being held.*

Question for EACH participant:

* Introduce yourself, your role and connection to teacher leadership?

Questions for the group:

* How do you connect your role as teacher/district leader to TPEP? (consider data and student growth, reflection, instructional best practices, etc.)
* What about the systems and structures in your district that have supported you in your success?
* Why do you believe teacher leadership is a worthy investment of resources? What is your understanding of where and how teacher leadership affects student and teacher growth?
* How have you, your colleagues and students benefitted from your own involvement in teacher leadership?
* Have you embarked on leadership prior to this that has not felt successful? Why do you believe it is different this time?
* What pitfalls have you encountered? What problems still exist to prevent broader impact? What are challenges or impediments?
* What have you had to give up to allow for your success in this role?

During this Fishbowl, have participants utilize the “Fishbowl #1 – Participant Note-Taking Template” at the end of the toolkit.

**Potential Questions for Fishbowl #2 (Participants from Other Districts)**

*Consider the following questions as a starting point for developing your own questions. Questions should yield conversation, be genuine and responsive to the previous fishbowl conversation.*

General questions:

* Ask EACH participant to introduce him/herself and their role in their district.
* How do you view teacher leadership and what is your understanding of where and how teacher leadership can affect student learning?
* How does the system of TPEP support the development of teacher leadership?
* What are the barriers you see to transformative teacher leadership opportunities?
* How can you remove barriers to teacher leadership?
* How can you encourage and support teacher leadership in at the building, district or state level?

During this Fishbowl, have participants utilize the “Fishbowl #2 – Participant Note-Taking Template” at the end of the toolkit.

**Potential Questions/Protocol for Break Out (job-alike groups)**

* What works well to create and support opportunities for teacher leadership?
* How might we apply what we learned in our district for further growth?
* Report Out: thematic opportunities for next steps (2-3 per group)

During the job-alike protocol, have participants utilize the template at the end of the toolkit.

**EXIT TICKET:** *Create one that works best for the facilitator and the host district, here are some examples.*

Commitment tickets: Ask each participant to write down a commitment they will make stemming from the Teacher Leadership Lab today. Ask all participants to circulate and read their commitments to each other. Ask a few volunteers to share theirs in a large group.

30-60-90: Using a template, or sticky notes and large chart paper, ask participants to write down what they will do in the next 30, 60 and 90 days (at least one idea for each timeframe) as a result of attending the Teacher Leadership Lab.

Headlines/Hashtags: Ask each participant to create/share either a headline or hashtag of their learning today.

You can also utilize the sample “Commitment / Exit Ticket” at the end of the toolkit.

**Fishbowl #1 - Participant Note-Taking Template**

Questions for Fishbowl #1:

* How do you connect your role as teacher/district leader to TPEP? (consider data and student growth, reflection, instructional best practices, etc.)
* What about the systems and structures in your district that have supported you in your success?
* Why do you believe teacher leadership is a worthy investment of resources? What is your understanding of where and how teacher leadership affects student and teacher growth?
* How have you, your colleagues and students benefitted from your own involvement in teacher leadership?
* Have you embarked on leadership prior to this that has not felt successful? Why do you believe it is different this time?
* What pitfalls have you encountered? What problems still exist to prevent broader impact? What are challenges or impediments?
* What have you had to give up to allow for your success in this role?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Problem of Practice:** from District Team Members | | |
| **I heard…** | **Makes me think…** | **I need to consider for next steps…** |
|  |  |  |

**Fishbowl #2 - Participant Note-Taking Template**

Questions for Fishbowl #2:

* *How do you view teacher leadership and what is your understanding of where and how teacher leadership can affect student learning?*
* *How does your district system support the development of teacher leadership?*
* *What are the barriers you see to transformative teacher leadership opportunities?*
* *How can you remove barriers to teacher leadership?*
* *How can you encourage and support teacher leadership in at the building, district or state level?*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| I heard… | Makes me think… | I need to consider for next steps… |
|  |  |  |

**Job-Alike Conversations: Note-Taking Template**

Questions for Job Alike Conversations:

* *What works well to create and support opportunities for teacher leadership?*
* *How might we apply what we learned in our district for further growth?*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| I heard… | Makes me think… | I need to consider for next steps… |
|  |  |  |

**Commitments & Exit Ticket**

**XXXXX School District Leadership Lab**

**DATE XXXXX**

Thank you for participating in the Leadership Lab in DISTRICT XXX. In order to continue the learning and reflection that began at this event, we would like you to share your commitments for next steps in supporting teacher leaders in your context. We will collate and share these commitments with participants via email following the Leadership Lab.

What is the ‘big idea’ or what are you taking away from the Leadership Lab today?

In moving from idea to action, what could you do in the next 30 days to begin to bring this idea into action?

What could you do in the next 60 days?

What could you do before the end of the school year?

What could you put into place for the next school year?