

## Editorial

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This Special Issue focuses on providing voice to teachers as we continue to evolve and grow the field of teacher leadership. From these voices, we learned that teacher leadership can offer career change and growth. We also gained insight into how teachers can be positive change agents in the school and throughout the community.

The narratives offered here demonstrate a desire for ongoing learning and development for these teacher leaders, and for the colleagues with whom they work. They noted for us the challenges of creating spaces and opportunities for this learning that are ongoing, job-embedded, meaningful, relevant, and do-able within the time constraints of teachers' work. The stories of teacher leadership offered through these articles resonate with passion, commitment, and desire to contribute to growing education beyond the authors' classroom walls.

From these articles we see the value teachers place in sharing their voice about what it means to be a teacher leader. They have found a way to use their voice in their districts, schools, and communities. Keisling's story about working to find her voice as a minoritized art educator reminds us of the importance of paying attention to whose voices are considered as we reflect on teacher leadership. Teachers can find access to a new voice in their work through leadership, as Keisling describes in her article.

Teacher leaders also provide voice for teachers through developing and guiding learning communities in schools. In this issue, Slack examines teacher growth in addressing the needs of English learners through the professional learning community process. Likewise, Donnelly, Holland, King, Clasborn, Lunney, Higgins, Gormley, Harford, and McElvaney share their experiences as participants in a community of practice focused on advocating for teacher practices that support the inclusion of children with exceptional needs. Finally, Bennett and Bromen describe how they developed and supported a community of teacher leaders across their district to support the integration of instructional technologies.

In addition, teacher leaders provide voice for multiple stakeholders as they engage in research toward advocacy. Mundorf, Beckett, Boehm, Flake, and Miller share the stories of four teachers who practice leadership for social justice through revising curriculum to empower students and supporting families in advocacy on behalf of their children. Keisling illuminates her development as a teacher leader who began her work with a focus on building strong relationships with students and their families, and expanding that work to advocate for students within her community. Arce describes differences among the ways that teachers, administrators, and parents/careers define family engagement, and how these differences influence support of students.

As indicated in our previous editorial (Cherkowski & Bradley-Levine, 2018), connecting teacher leaders' work to student learning continues to be an area of needed research. Several of the articles in this issue offer insights into how we might engage with teacher leaders to learn more about their influence on student learning in relation to teachers' attention to inclusion, equity, activism and social justice; to the integration of instructional technologies in the

classroom; and to the structures that are afforded teachers for ongoing learning, development and collegial community-building.

Among the teacher leaders featured in this issue, action research focused on their own practice seems to be the consistent research method. Thus, we acknowledge a need for further attention to examining and developing the ways that universities work with districts to grow and build research methods for teacher leaders to utilize when researching about their practice and presenting their findings to diverse audiences including colleagues, administrators, community members, families, and academics. For example, professional development through partnerships with districts, as well as through graduate programs designed to meet teachers' needs.

Finally, we hope this issue offers a starting point for mobilizing the knowledge of teacher leaders in the field. Given that several of the articles in this special issue are arranged around a group of teacher leaders working together to improve teaching and learning in their schools, we believe it would be interesting to push the research on conceptions of "collective teacher leadership." We note a need to explore what is likely happening in schools within groups of teacher leaders working together toward common goals. This focus aligns with the move toward collaborative teaching and professional learning that are prominent in research on school improvement and leadership.

Our own approach as guest editors has been collaborative as we worked together in planning and editing this issue with each other, our reviewers, and the teacher authors. We are grateful to the reviewers for this special issue: Drs. Sylvia Bagley (University of Washington), Cynthia Carver (Oakland University), Amy Gimino (California State Polytechnic University, Pomona), and Jared Stallones (University of Kentucky). The reviewers engaged from an encouraging and nurturing approach with the authors, supporting them in revising and strengthening articles that will be useful to practitioners and offer scholarly contributions. We appreciate the time and attention they offered to help grow the field of teacher leadership through their mentoring stance as reviewers with these emerging scholars.

### **Authors' Note**

Jill Bradley-Levine, Ph.D., is associate professor of educational studies at Ball State University, where she also directs the Master of Arts in secondary education, the transition to secondary teaching program, and the Hoosier STEM Academy teacher education program. Her scholarship centers on curriculum and instruction in practice, and has developed around three areas: (a) teacher agency through the practice of leadership, (b) innovative instructional practices, and (c) teacher development of and participation in communities of learning.

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## References

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