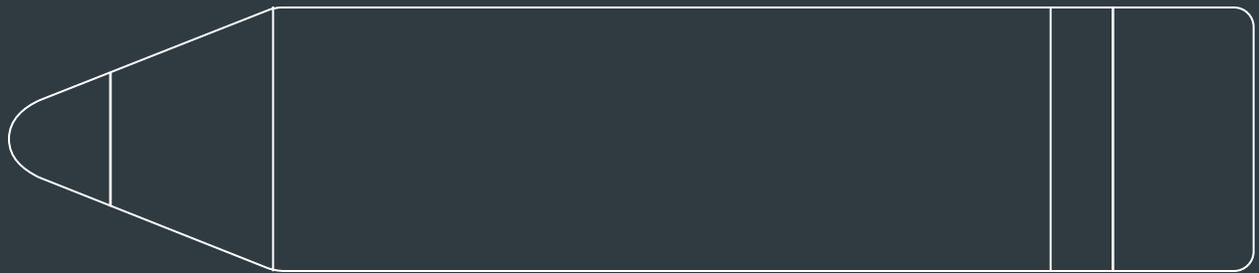


TEACHERS AT WORK

DESIGNING SCHOOLS
WHERE TEACHERS &
STUDENTS THRIVE



Opportunities to Collaboratively
Improve School Work Environments

Actionable Brief | October 2018

100K_{IN}10

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INTRODUCTION

Schools are the engines of economic and social mobility, where the virtues required for citizenship are wrestled with and practiced, and where the foundations of a robust and dynamic citizenship, democracy, and economy are nurtured.

Teachers are the heart, soul, and muscle of our schools. Research has pointed time and time again to teachers as the strongest in-school influence on student learning and development. They guide our children to think critically, carefully, and creatively, and to reach their greatest potential as adults. The people who will cure dementia and take us to Mars, renew our energy resources and revolutionize how we communicate, design our cities, and mitigate natural disasters — they are sitting in our nation’s classrooms at this very moment. And it’s our teachers who are fueling their dreams and igniting their passions, laying the foundation for the breakthroughs and inventions that will drive us into the 22nd century.

Despite understanding this truth, schools too often neglect teachers. Teachers also have dreams, and they too need to be nurtured to reach their fullest potential. This means creating workplaces where teachers are empowered by school leaders as professionals to learn and grow and to meaningfully collaborate with peers.

But too often, we fall victim to the misimpression that schools must choose either student learning or teacher learning, when in fact student learning and teacher learning are interwoven and mutually reinforcing. When teachers flourish as professionals in schools, they leave the classroom far less frequently and have significantly higher satisfaction. As a result, teacher instruction is stronger, students learn more, and our next generation is more prepared and inspired to pursue the educations, careers, and lives of their choice.

Recognizing this, 100Kin10 decided to mobilize our network to address three issues related to teachers’ work environments in schools that, based on more than two years of research and tens of thousands of data points, rose to the top as the highest leverage opportunities for impact:

1. [Relevant professional growth during the school day](#)
2. [Opportunities for teacher collaboration during the school day](#)
3. [School leader responsibility for creating positive work environments](#)

Guided by a Brain Trust of partners and teachers, 100Kin10 dug into the research surrounding these issues, looking both at what has inhibited progress and where the field has experienced success thus far. This analysis points us to the areas in greatest demand, where the network can deploy its unique collaborative problem-solving capacities to address the multifaceted nature of these work environment issues in schools.

As a precursor to the findings, we want to emphasize that although we are a network focused on STEM teachers, these issues are almost always experienced across entire school communities and are not particular to one subset of teachers. Therefore much of this analysis is applicable to a broader range of teachers beyond those that focus exclusively on STEM.

This report is intended to lay the groundwork and be the launchpad for diverse, coordinated, and mutually reinforcing efforts to improve school work

environments, not to serve as a research publication. With this in mind, we have designed the report in two parts: 1) the “actionable brief” focuses readers on background information, a summary of the themes identified through the research, and the most meaningful opportunities for impact, and 2) the “supporting research and analysis” that ensures that those who want to dig in deeper or access more specific evidence have the means to do so.

We invite you to join us. Start by digging into the briefing booklet, and then into the [full report](#) as it suits your needs. Then contribute your unique assets and resources to coordinated efforts to transform more schools into supportive and growth-oriented workplaces for teachers and thriving learning environments for all members of the school community. Together we can support all schools to develop and nurture a positive work environment for teachers.

PURPOSE

Over two years, 100Kin10 developed the [Grand Challenges](#), an unprecedented roadmap of the underlying problems facing the STEM education landscape and the first-ever comprehensive ecosystem of a social-sector problem. The map identifies 104 critical challenges and the “[catalysts](#)”, the greatest leverage points for change across the Grand Challenges. The catalysts reflect the synthesis of tens of thousands of perspectives on which issues, if improved, would generate a domino-like effect and the most improvement across the system.

Three of the catalysts were related to teacher work environments, which far overrepresented this issue’s appearance in the map at large. Based on their outsized influence, as well as partner desire to work on these topics, current field-wide activity and interest, research into opportunities for impact, stakeholder evaluation of their value, and the network’s unique position to make change against them, we decided to focus the network on these three. To reiterate, they are relevant professional growth during the school day, opportunities for teacher collaboration during the school day, and school leader responsibility for creating positive work environments.

Over the coming year and beyond, we will work with and empower our network to collaboratively effect lasting change against these catalysts related to work environment. The network at large will both accentuate that focus and continue to support all partner organization in the network to learn, innovate, and implement their work toward the shared goal of providing America’s classrooms with 100,000 excellent STEM teachers and addressing the Grand Challenges that created this shortage in the first place.

In the summer of 2018, as we began the research that informs this report, we set out to gain a deeper understanding of the teacher work environment catalysts, with the ultimate objective of answering one question: “What actions should the field undertake to address the

teacher work environment catalysts, and where is the 100Kin10 hub uniquely positioned to drive that action across our network by employing our collaborative problem-solving tools?”

The following questions guided this work:

- What are the issues that cause the work environment catalysts?
- What has already been tried across the field in response to the work environment catalysts, and what do we know about what is and isn’t working?
- Taking into account the analysis of the influencing issues and existing or past efforts, where do opportunities exist to try something new?

The research and analysis used three types of data:

- Desk Research — We completed a review of more than 60 sources, including academic research, editorials, news articles, websites, and blogs, including a deep investigation of over 30 organizations’ work.
- Interviews — We completed phone interviews with leaders from eight organizations working deeply in one or more of the catalyst areas.
- Brain Trust Advisory — We convened an advisory group consisting of diverse leadership from 100Kin10 partner organizations and the Teacher Forum, and consulted them multiple times during the project. The group provided feedback on the research questions and plans, contributed to a root cause analysis, and provided feedback on early versions of the research summary and opportunity areas.

A full accounting of references, interviews, and Brain Trust members is included in the Research Sources section of this report.

EXPLAINING “POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT”

There are multiple existing conceptualizations of what a positive work environment for adults looks like in a school setting. Some of these definitions present largely comprehensive definitions of adult work environment, explicitly addressing the idea that an adult’s work environment is distinct from broader ideas of school culture and climate and more student-facing definitions of school-based environments. Others discuss or define components of adult working environment more indirectly, for example, implied in discussions of the supports or culture adults require in order to create a positive climate for students. 100Kin10 is not seeking to create or select one definition of positive work environment. Instead, we identify here a grouping of existing definitions and constructs that resonate with our conceptualization of the work environment catalysts we seek to address, and through their compilation provide a working definition for the purposes of this work.

At its simplest level, many existing definitions hone in on the systems and supports teachers need to create a positive school climate for students, thereby indirectly describing aspects of the working conditions needed for teachers to be effective at driving student learning. In a recent study, researchers from the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research captured this idea when reporting that school principals most influence student learning by fostering strong learning climates, and effective leaders act to promote strong learning climates through creating “systems for supporting teachers to support students.”¹¹ Of the systems teachers need to support students, the Chicago Consortium’s researchers focused on structures for collaboration among staff and systems that advance the leadership capacity of the school around shared goals.

While the Chicago Consortium’s notion is both high-level and framed around fostering positive climate for students rather than directly addressing adult working environment, other frameworks are highly complementary and provide more direct and/or detailed conceptualizations of adult working environment within a school.

New Leaders, in their report “Playmakers: How great principals build and lead great teams of teachers,” describes three intersecting areas where great principals take action to build effective teams of teachers and amplify great teaching. As seen in Figure 1, one of these areas, titled “Creating a Great Place to Work,” defines the following components:

- Building a culture of respect through establishing routines and rituals that signal teachers are valued; demanding that teachers respect one another, for example, through respectfully resolving differences; and respecting teachers’ time and opinions
- Fostering teacher learning communities through giving teachers a structured way to learn from each other and push each other to improve, and encouraging collaboration among teachers
- Individualizing roles and responsibilities through understanding their staff’s teaching interests and making every effort to accommodate that
- Cultivating leadership through giving teachers a voice in decisions and rewarding teachers with increased leadership
- Instituting a code of conduct through enforcing school-wide consistency and aligning codes to school values

Nicole Simon and Susan Moore Johnson, in their paper reframing the factors leading to teacher turnover in high-poverty schools, reviewed multiple existing studies that examined the impact of working conditions on teacher turnover. They argue that poor working conditions for teachers in low-income schools are the driver of teacher turnover, and that retention strategies to staff these schools must focus on improving the environment for teachers. Their research found that across all the studies reviewed, some combination of the following three aspects of working conditions influenced teacher satisfaction and career decisions: quality of school leadership, the caliber of collegial relationships, and specific aspects of school culture.

Simon and Johnson describe school culture as a broad construct encompassing many elements of a school's context, without a clear or agreed-upon definition across the field. Broadly, it includes concepts such as the norms and values that influence behaviors, and the extent to which there is a sense of community and mutual social trust. Simon and Johnson also describe the overlap between elements of school culture and the other two components of working conditions identified across the research, for example, the principal's responsiveness to teachers' ideas and teachers' readiness to support new colleagues. In their paper, while acknowledging the broad set of ideas often included in definitions of school culture, they choose to focus on two centered on interactions with students and parents — student discipline and parent engagement — as specific aspects of school culture that are powerful drivers of teacher turnover.³

Researchers from the Learning Policy Institute note the following key factors influence teachers' decisions about whether or not to stay in the profession — all aspects of work environments that mediate between the school leader's role and teacher retention, and all areas where the principal plays a central role:

- School culture and collegial relationships
- Creating collaborative environments, including time for collaboration
- Presence of distributive leadership structures and teacher leadership roles

- Decision-making input for teachers
- Career advancement opportunities for teachers
- Teachers serving as mentors or models for their colleagues^{4,5}

The Wallace Foundation, in its report “The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning,” identifies five practices that are key to the work of effective principals, based on lessons from 20 years of their focus on school leadership:

- Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards
- Creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit, and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail
- Cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their parts in realizing the school vision
- Improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn to their utmost
- Managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement



When defining a climate hospitable to education, Wallace reports: “Effective principals ensure that their schools allow both adults and children to put learning at the center of their daily activities ... characterized by basics like safety and orderliness, as well as less tangible qualities such as a ‘supportive, responsive attitude toward the children and a sense by teachers that they are part of a community of professionals focused on good instruction.’”⁶

The Urban Schools Human Capital Academy defines the following nine “Components of a Strong Team Culture,” noting culture is the way an organization “does business” and is “what we say, what we do, and what we value”:

- Creating a Shared Team Vision and Direction
- Agreeing Values, Practices, and Behaviors
- Building Team Identity
- Setting Goals and Facilitating Results
- Appreciating and Using Team Differences
- Strengthening Team Capabilities
- Being Mutually Accountable
- Exploring Possibilities and Perspectives
- Driving for Results and Challenging the Process⁷

1. Allensworth, E.M. & Hart, H. (2018). *How do principals influence student achievement?* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.
2. Ikemoto, G., Taliaferro, L., & Adams, E. (2012). *Playmakers: How great principals build and lead great teams of teachers.* New York, NY: New Leaders Inc.
3. Simon, N. & Johnson, S.M. (2015). *Teacher Turnover in High-Poverty Schools: What We Know and Can Do.* *Teachers College Record.* 117(3), 1–36.
4. Learning Policy Institute. (2017). “The Role of Principals in Addressing Teacher Shortages” (research brief). Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.
5. Interview with Desiree Carver-Thomas.
6. Wallace Foundation. (2013). *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning.* New York, NY: Wallace Foundation.
7. Wallace Foundation. (2013). *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning.* New York, NY: Wallace Foundation.

THEMES FROM THE ANALYSIS

Our examination of over 60 sources, supplemented by focus groups and interviews, revealed myriad reasons why many teachers face poor work environments in schools. From this, four related themes emerged: current beliefs, structures, capacities, and resources interfere with strong work environments for teachers. Those four challenges interact to restrict meaningful, relevant, and regular opportunities for professional growth and collaboration for teachers during the school day and to hinder principals from building positive work environments for teachers.

This section describes each theme and summarizes its primary causes, such that readers can quickly understand the roots of why school environments today too rarely enable adults in the building to thrive. We also summarize high-level learnings from the field about what is currently known to work well to address these challenges, setting us up to pivot to opportunities for action in the following section. A complete analysis of the influencing causes and the solution space is included in the full version of this report.

BELIEFS

Ample research demonstrates the strong relationship between healthy work environment and teacher retention, teacher satisfaction, effective instruction, and ultimately student achievement. However, predominant beliefs undervalue work environment for teachers, and specifically how it drives student learning. In response, K–12 education is designed with a primarily student-centric view. Student learning broadly, as well as schooling experiences and climate for students, drives the vast majority of reform efforts and decisions about which programs and strategies to implement, how to expend resources, and how to approach teacher professional learning. While a focus on student learning is certainly not a bad thing per se, it often comes at the expense of a similar valuing of adult learning and growth, and the nature of the work environment for adults within schools. This stems from the commonly held, albeit misguided, assumption that schools must choose between student learning and teacher learning.

In fact, the success of students and teachers is closely tied and mutually reinforcing. Ultimately, teacher professional growth is needed to ensure teachers are best able to serve all students.

The widespread beliefs that result in the undervaluing of teacher professional culture in today's school environments are driven by two main factors. First, many district and state leaders, policymakers, reformers, and school leaders lack awareness about the importance of teacher work environment and the evidence of its impact on student learning. Second, in many cases, state and local policymakers and district and school leaders do not regard the school as a workplace or teaching as a valued profession, missing the complexity and challenge inherent in teachers' work.

STRUCTURES

A mismatch exists between traditional school structures in place today and those that research has shown create positive work environment. Examples of school structures that, as currently implemented in most schools, do not align with a strong and positive teacher work environment include school schedules, teacher career pathways, methods of distributing school-level leadership responsibilities, teacher evaluation and accountability models, professional development delivery and content selection, and compensation models. Building a positive work environment for teachers and instituting high-quality, consistent opportunities during the school day for teacher collaboration and professional growth require substantial shifts and redesign of the structures currently in place in most schools.

This mismatch is influenced by several factors. First, school and district leaders have neither experience with nor training in what a well-functioning work environment in schools looks like, and how to create and sustain it in a way that reinforces and

enhances student learning. Second, traditional school structures are not designed to prioritize teacher work environment, nor do they easily accommodate the kinds of significant changes required to address the work environment catalysts in a meaningful and successful manner. Furthermore, school leaders often have limited autonomy or flexibility to make decisions about key structures at the building level.

Finally, authentic teacher leadership models are shown by research to be a core component of school environments with high-quality, embedded professional learning and collaboration opportunities, and to be a key mechanism for creating positive working conditions for teachers. Yet those models often fail to institute the structures needed to support effective implementation. For instance, one often sees teacher leadership models instituted without structures such as formalized teacher leadership roles within a clear career pathway and sufficient, regular meeting time for teacher teams.

SCHOOL LEADER & TEACHER CAPACITY

Improvements in work environment for teachers, specifically those that increase opportunities for learning and collaboration during the school day, rely on actions on the part of school leaders to design, implement, and ultimately support new strategies, as well as capacity on the part of teachers to effectively work inside of those strategies. Designing and implementing these kinds of integrated approaches is challenging and requires substantial effort and ability, particularly for school leaders without experience or understanding for how to do so. Beyond this, school leaders often lack the capacity, both in terms of knowledge and skills, and the available time and other supports to execute these actions, and receive little training or ongoing learning to aid in these efforts. Moreover, teachers need support for how to operate effectively in work environments that offer meaningful leadership opportunities and opportunities for collaboration.

Lack of school leader and teacher capacity to improve work environment in schools stems from several factors. First, school leader training programs do not provide leaders with the training, knowledge, and skills to redesign teacher professional growth and collaboration opportunities, design and implement high-quality distributed leadership structures, serve as an effective managers for teachers and teacher leaders, and ultimately create positive working environments for teachers. As noted earlier, this also contributes to school leaders' and teachers' beliefs about what an effective culture and work environment look like in schools and how to create them. Second, principal responsibilities and demands are numerous and overwhelming, leaving school leaders with little time to focus on these significant redesign efforts and the longer-term work of shifting culture and work environment. Finally, teachers lack the training and support to be stewards of their professional growth and to effectively operate in an environment that utilizes collaboration.

RESOURCES

Research across the work environment catalysts points to the need for additional and more flexible funding and resources to promote positive teacher work environments and create more opportunities for high-quality learning and collaboration during the school day. Additional or repurposed funding is first needed to introduce new, effective models into schools. Then, even more resources are required to support the implementation of the models themselves: additional compensation for teacher leaders, capacity-building opportunities for school leaders to effectively implement these models, and supporting staff or other methods that allow teachers to meet during the school day without reducing meaningful student instructional time.

Two primary factors drive the lack of resources to support the design and implementation of strategies to support teacher work environments. First, strategies aimed at improving teacher work environments and that prioritize teacher learning and working conditions are often not aligned with existing district budget priorities and constraints. This makes it difficult or impossible for school leaders to justify shifting existing resources or requesting additional funds towards these strategies, particularly in environments with little budget autonomy or flexibility at the school level. Second, because schools often do not have the data to assess working conditions and their impact, school leaders and others can be challenged to make the argument for allocating additional resources to address these issues.

LEARNING FROM WHAT'S WORKED

Alongside analyzing the challenges to implementing strong teacher work environment in schools, we identified efforts to address these areas and highlight those that are working well or showing promise. In the full report, we include spotlights of successful programs and organizations. Below, we summarize themes seen across those existing efforts.

Much is currently being done to provide teachers with more opportunities for relevant, high-quality professional growth and collaboration during the school day. Several models exist that encompass the integrated approach identified by the research and serve to support districts and schools with the training, tools, and technical assistance to transform their schools into learning environments for teachers. The most successful efforts to integrate teacher professional growth and collaboration into the fabric of the school day are anchored by the following components:

- Time for consistent, frequent, intensive interactions between a coach and/or teacher leader and with collaborative teams, on average one to two hours per week
- Formal roles for teacher leaders that are well-defined, with clear authority and accountability attached to the role, multiple roles in a teacher leadership career path, and appropriate financial and other recognition for their expertise and leadership work
- Clear, new roles for school leaders as supporters of teacher leadership, and through a distributed leadership model, ultimately of teacher and student growth
- Structures, tools, and resources that guide collaboration and professional growth activities and ensure they are relevant, meaningful, and actionable
- Capacity-building and ongoing support for school leaders, teacher leaders, and teachers to effectively carry out professional growth and collaboration activities during the school day

- A high-quality standards-aligned curriculum serving as a precondition of and foundation for teacher growth and collaboration activities, ensuring they are relevant and aligned to a school's broader instructional improvement efforts

Research points to three key aspects of a principal's role that have a direct impact on teacher working conditions, collectively naming how effective leaders need to provide both instructional and emotional support to their teachers as part of cultivating positive adult work environment:

- Principals as overall school managers, ensuring administrative concerns are handled, systems and structures are in place to enable teachers to do their best work, and teachers have the resources needed to deliver effective instruction
- Principals as instructional leaders, ensuring teachers have the support to master their craft and leadership is distributed to expert teacher leaders
- Principals as drivers of a community and culture within their buildings, ensuring that they are great places for adults to work, with an overall sense of community and culture of mutual respect, collegial support, and collective ownership of vision and outcomes

While the research is clear on these three parts of a principal's role, not enough is known generally in the field about how school leaders go about creating positive work environments for teachers. In addition to this limited knowledge, there is little publicly available information about effective practices and methods to train and support school leaders to create positive work environments in their buildings. Notably, efforts are currently underway to better catalog existing models of leadership development that focus on these competencies.⁸

8. For example, the Learning Policy Institute is currently conducting case studies on leadership preparation with the desire to focus on programs that prepare leaders with the skills needed to create collaborative environments and other markers of positive teacher work environments.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MOVING THE FIELD

Building on our research, we identified a handful of promising opportunities, prime for collaborative action by 100Kin10 partners and allies, with the power to shift work environment for teachers in schools. As the previous section on themes reveals, there are many challenges we face as a field, but there is also a substantial amount of knowledge that exists in schools, districts, and capacity-building organizations about how leaders and others can effectively nurture positive work environments in schools. As with so many challenges in education, we needn't rush as a field to innovation — many of the solutions are right in our own (or a nearby neighbor's) backyard. Alongside elevating promising practices and continuing to learn about and improve them, perhaps the biggest challenge will be figuring out how to facilitate access to promising practices for those who are in a position to adapt and incorporate them into their own efforts and contexts.

In this section, we introduce several opportunities with the potential to make field-level progress against the issues of teacher work environment in schools:

1. The field needs to shift our collective **beliefs** about schools to be spaces of inclusive learning, where both kids and adults are empowered, encouraged, and supported to grow in their respective pursuits, and where the strong correlation between student and teacher learning is recognized and valued.
2. Leadership of districts and school groups needs to implement **structures** that value teacher learning, professionalism, and working conditions, alongside student achievement.
3. School leaders need additional **capacity**, specifically practical information, tools, and support, to bring to life the structures that value teacher learning, professionalism, and working conditions, alongside student achievement; and teachers need additional **capacity** in the form of skills and knowledge to be contributing members of — and sometimes leaders in — a robust and collaborative learning environment.
4. Districts and schools need additional and more flexible **resources** to design and implement the structures that will build positive teacher work environments and create more opportunities for high-quality learning and collaboration during the school day, and then to deepen school leader and teacher capacity to actualize those structures.

The field needs to shift our collective **BELIEFS** about schools to be spaces of inclusive learning, where both kids and adults are empowered, encouraged, and supported to grow in their respective pursuits, and where the strong correlation between student and teacher learning is recognized and valued.

DO NOW

Engage communications expertise to develop messaging tools to talk to state and local leaders, school boards, teacher and principal preparation and support-providers, and school leaders themselves about **the importance of a strong work environment for teachers in schools and its impact on teacher retention, teacher satisfaction, effective instruction, and student learning.**

- This could include guidelines or instructions on how to implement or adapt these tools to enable wider use.
- This messaging would use 100Kin10's research on the work environment catalysts and include connections to quality implementation of standards-aligned curriculum, the impact on highest-need schools, etc.
- This messaging would also seek to bolster awareness and understanding of the connection between work environments and teacher retention and effectiveness, and ultimately student learning.
- This could also include telling the stories of schools and school leaders who are prioritizing strong work environments through practices that include teacher learning and collaboration.
- Refer to Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation's research on labor management collaboration.

THEN BUILD

Adapt messaging tools to local contexts and for their specific perspectives and needs.

- For example, the “template version” could instruct individuals adapting the tools to connect with the local teachers and students, and elicit their voices around the importance of strong work environments, job satisfaction, and more. Their quotes and the local data on job satisfaction and retention could then inform and be infused into the messaging.
- This adaptation could grow into a local advocacy campaign around teachers' work environment, or be integrated into a district-wide culture reboot. It could even happen school by school, organized and coordinated by local teachers, parents, or other community members.
- Further support beyond the guidelines or instructions, including expertise in campaigns, movement-building, or change-management, as well as an exchange of what is and isn't working across use cases, would likely lead to stronger implementation.
- Early examples and stories of adaptations can enable and encourage broader utilization and learning about effective implementation.

District, Charter Management Organization, and other school management and support groups need to implement **STRUCTURES** that value teacher learning, professionalism, and work environments, alongside student achievement.

DO NOW

Building on the research in this report, perform a landscape scan to consolidate **evidence-backed school models that value teacher work environment, alongside student achievement.**

- The research should explore topics including schedules, teacher leadership roles, principal roles, distributive leadership, and other structures that enable positive work environment in schools.
- Flexibility to continue teaching while taking on additional leadership opportunities is key to successful teacher leadership models, as is training and support specific to teachers' new leadership responsibilities.
- Explore models including the National Network of State Teachers of the Year's teacher leadership curriculum for resources on adult learning and teacher teams, the New Teacher Center's work with teacher leaders, the New Leaders' Emerging Leaders program, and Oakland Unified School District's investment in a science teacher leader model.
- Explore the work of the National Network of State Teachers of the Year and the Aspen Institute focused on distributed leadership that crosswalks education leadership/administrator standards and teacher leadership standards, as well as Public Impact's Opportunity Culture.
- This scan should include an analysis of key elements that schools and districts can consider adapting.

THEN BUILD

Involve a subset of 100Kin10 partners and allies in a “micro-network” of districts, CMOs, and other school management and support groups to implement and test school models that value teacher work environments, based on findings from the landscape scan.

- Participation in the micro-network can include learning exchange; collaboratively building, adapting, or improving solutions; deepening the knowledge base on teacher leadership models; and more.
- Start with districts, CMOs, and other school management and support groups that are eager early adopters to develop champions and help build broader excitement. Also consider engaging regional centers or cooperatives in states, as they have existing strong relationship with diverse districts and can help engage more partners and expedite uptake of strong practices.
- These discussions should include the head of operations within districts, CMOs, and other school management and support groups, where applicable, as they are key decision-makers around how money is allocated to enable different types of school models. It may also be important to include school boards in these conversations.

District, Charter Management Organization, and other school management and support groups need to implement **STRUCTURES** that value teacher learning, professionalism, and work environments, alongside student achievement.

DO NOW

Create a playbook that explains how to **use strategies such as collective leadership to develop teacher contracts that value teachers' work environments**, but also respond to the needs of the district and the union. Use success stories as examples to build from.

THEN BUILD

Districts and unions can adapt this playbook and apply it to their contract negotiations.

District, Charter Management Organization, and other school management and support groups need to implement **STRUCTURES** that value teacher learning, professionalism, and work environments, alongside student achievement.

DO NOW

Explore how **capacity-building organizations that support districts and schools can partner to coordinate efforts** and enable more integrated approaches and ultimately wider adoption and implementation of effective models for strong work environment in schools.

- This discussion will investigate how focused collaboration or integration across organizations working to support system transformation could build coherence within systems, lead to the ability to collectively support more districts, and be expanded to explore how schools and districts, CMOs, and other school management and support groups can over time adapt and integrate these quality practices and models into their core operating model. This could result in a decreased reliance on these external services.
- As a starting place, explore emergent work in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to coordinate the work of multiple support organizations to scale practices that support teacher growth and collaboration across a group of more than 20 schools, supported by the Schusterman Foundation, to assess ongoing work in this area and opportunities for expansion. Also explore the American Federation of Teachers' Peer Assistance and Review system focused on fostering continuous professional growth, and the work in Kansas City, Missouri, with School Smart Kansas City.

District, Charter Management Organization, and other school management and support groups need to implement **STRUCTURES** that value teacher learning, professionalism, and work environments, alongside student achievement.

DO NOW

Survey the field to identify **different types and roles of principal managers**, and how these differences enable or inhibit principal effectiveness in general, and specifically principal effectiveness in nurturing schools that value student and teacher learning.

- This survey should include the different cost structures for these principal managers and how districts have integrated into traditional structures or shifted their staffing to make possible.

THEN BUILD

Looking across the effectiveness of different kinds of principal managers, develop a checklist that districts could use to guide how they refine or define the principal manager role. This checklist could also be used by principal managers themselves to guide their direct goals and strategies with principals.

School leaders need additional **CAPACITY**, specifically practical information, tools, and support, to bring to life the structures that value teacher learning, professionalism, and working conditions, alongside student achievement; and teachers need additional **CAPACITY** in the form of skills and knowledge to be contributing members of — and sometimes leaders in — a robust and collaborative learning environment.

DO NOW

Perform a landscape scan including both secondary research and surveys with principals to identify the **specific actions by principals that are most critical to building positive work environments**.

- There is a big opportunity to learn from school leaders around the country who are already doing excellent work to build strong work environments that prioritize teachers. Look into New Leaders’ “Playmakers” report and Transformational Leadership Framework for foundational information.
- The output of this scan would include key practices that principals can adapt in their own schools to build a stronger work environment.
- This can also include a scan of successful management practices in nonschool environments and build on best practices and tools to analyze culture in other sectors.

THEN BUILD

Develop processes and systems that enable principals to capture data that help them understand if and how effectively they are employing the practices identified through the scan of school leaders excelling in building positive work environments.

- It could also come to life as a “quiz” that school leaders could take to evaluate the work environment in their schools.
- Next, invite a group of principals to implement these practices and gather data on them to deepen knowledge about the impacts of these practices.

School leaders need additional **CAPACITY**, specifically practical information, tools, and support, to bring to life the structures that value teacher learning, professionalism, and working conditions, alongside student achievement; and teachers need additional **CAPACITY** in the form of skills and knowledge to be contributing members of — and sometimes leaders in — a robust and collaborative learning environment.

DO NOW

Map out the **continuum of a principal's professional track**. Identify the current major milestones in a principal's training and support, and where possible, point to gaps within it.

- A connected and coherent professional experience for principals would lead to more effective principals and teachers, which have a direct and strong impact on student learning. The professional continuum of a principal — including recruitment, preparation, certification, and ongoing support — is not sufficiently understood and rarely given the attention or investment it deserves.
- Explore current principal preparation and support models to identify both their current priorities and where there are opportunities to expand or shift them to integrate training on building positive work environments.
- This mapping should include a focus on the data we would need to collect to drive this work, including teacher turnover, principal turnover, deployment to high-needs schools, retention of highly effective principals and teachers, and more. It could also be important to disaggregate these data by race or ethnicity to further understand gaps in students' access to teachers and principals who share their backgrounds.
- Explore how mentorships or internships in schools with strong work environments for teachers can support the preparation of future principals. Also explore how these schools that have a strong work environment help build the pipeline for future principals.

THEN BUILD

Players working across the principal continuum can come together to identify how they can collaboratively address these gaps.

- This could include, for example, a method for measuring the inputs of teacher retention to better understand the biggest influences that encourage our most effective teachers to stay in the classroom.
- Or it could include principal preparation and/or support programs participating in a working group to determine how to integrate findings from these scans into their prep programs.

School leaders need additional **CAPACITY**, specifically practical information, tools, and support, to bring to life the structures that value teacher learning, professionalism, and working conditions, alongside student achievement; and teachers need additional **CAPACITY** in the form of skills and knowledge to be contributing members of — and sometimes leaders in — a robust and collaborative learning environment.

DO NOW

Perform a scan to identify best practices across fields in **training individuals to effectively collaborate with and lead adults**.

- Using the findings from the scan, pinpoint key practices that can be adapted for teacher preparation and professional development.
- This can include schools, districts, or organizations that are successfully training or supporting teachers to build collaboration skills and teacher-leadership skills.
- It should also investigate the role of the school leader.
- Look into Teach For America's work on effective collaboration identified through their research on leadership.

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Organizations that work with pre-service or in-service teachers can develop a set of practices that can be infused into existing teachers-facing programs that support teachers to develop collaboration and peer-leadership skills.

- This includes organizations that are preparing or supporting teachers to use co-teaching models.

Districts and schools need additional and more flexible **RESOURCES** to design and implement the structures that will build positive teacher work environment and create more opportunities for high-quality during-the-school-day learning and collaboration, and then to deepen school leader and teacher capacity to actualize those structures.

DO NOW

Develop a cohesive set of materials and guidelines that encourage states and districts to use **Title II formula funds to strengthen principal quality.**

- Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, up to 3 percent of Title II funds can be set aside to strengthen principal quality, including by investing in principal recruitment, preparation, induction, and development.
- These resources should help users understand efficient ways to use these funds to ensure a strong return on investment, as well as making the case for how allocating funds toward school leader professional learning will have a multiplied impact on teachers.
- They should also acknowledge that there is not widespread awareness about this opportunity, and that raising awareness about it is likely a piece of this effort.
- Consider bringing on expertise in policy, communications, or campaign-design to support the development of resources.
- Explore New Leaders' existing resources, such as the white paper "Prioritizing Leadership: Opportunities in ESSA for Chief State School Officers," as a starting place.

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Connect and network organizations that are using these materials and guidelines to enable their effective implementation by sharing successes, acting as thought partners to overcome roadblocks, and serving as peer experts.

- Continued support from experts in policy, communications, or campaign-design may be necessary.
- An aligned community of stakeholders using these resources would also increase their impact.
- Early examples and stories of adaptations can enable and encourage broader utilization and learning about effective implementation.

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