

National Summit on Teacher Leadership

February 5-6, 2016 in Washington D.C.

**If you want a voice, you have to be willing to speak out.
If you don't believe in yourself, how do you expect others to believe
you?**

**When we speak out together, we have power.
Create a new narrative, instead of "reform" - Uplifting teaching,
uplifts student achievement.**

We must create an infrastructure of power. As Randi Weingarten said, "We need to find ways to bust open the doors." We need to create a new paradigm in which authentic voices are respected and enacted. This paradigm is what teacher unions are supposed to be about. ESSA is an opportunity for us to take the lead – otherwise, someone else will fill the vacuum. If we don't lead, someone else will.

It is time for us to take charge of our narrative. We must challenge those that have the money and are currently shaping our future. Our narrative has to be, "Teachers must be empowered to be truly effective." We must be autonomous, empowered leaders in our classrooms. Teachers must be expected, because of their profession, to act and be looked at as a leader; we must participate in the collaborative authority of the educational community.

We need to be our own public relations firm. We need a collective narrative; we need to start winning the game of public perception. We must get away from the main topic of conversations being mandates. When we talk, we must talk about the changes our students need, and the changes teacher need to make them successful.

Why are we not having more teachers involved in leadership roles in their school?

- Are there opportunities available, and if so do teachers understand the opportunities? If not, why not?
- Some districts do not have a common understanding of what teacher leadership means; leadership does not just mean a position titled "department leader," or the movement to an administrator position. What is preventing districts from understanding what teacher leadership entails?
- Fiscal problem at district level undermine the structures that lead to innovation. We must move from a reliance on intrinsic motivation in

exceptional teachers to creating a culture of innovation in the school. Teachers' voices should be helping the district and state. How do we get central offices at the district and state level on board?

- Teacher leaders should be driving the culture, and not seen as being an obstruction to improvement. Why is this not happening?
- Teachers see no incentive to becoming teacher leaders or participating in educational change. Is SDE a challenge to innovation, or can they create a vehicle that will challenge districts to be innovative? The idea of principals sharing resources is common in England. A "competition of collegiality" exists. How is that sense replicated here? How can it be replicated?

Impact of idea – Problem Statement

Teachers – Outstanding teachers should still be in the classroom, but in an elevated profession. Teaching is a vocation. We must remain true that teaching a profession, not a stepping stone to a profession. We must reclaim the public perception that teaching is a noble profession. We build credibility from not only administration and colleagues, but students and the community as well. We must allow teacher autonomy to promote the professional values, especially that of continuous self-improvement.

Paraprofessionals – Is there a viable pathway (if there is a desire) to become teacher? Is there a leadership path for those who do not want to become a teacher but who love being a paraprofessional?

Students – Are students being inspired by teachers to become a teacher? Do they see teachers outside the classroom in another community capacity, as whole individuals? How do we motivate students to become teachers? The "classroom to colleague" model is especially important in urban areas, but must resonate in every community.