



Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement

TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Overview

The early successes of the South Carolina Teacher Forum resulted in the formation of local District Teacher Forums which have applied techniques and structures learned at the South Carolina Teacher Forum meetings to district or county education issues and policies. District Teacher Forums are voluntary, non-partisan groups of exemplary teachers, whose core membership is made up of Campus Teachers of the Year, joined together for the purpose of developing new skills, exercising leadership and self-direction, and exploring collaboratively education policy issues. The forum operates as a cohort, a group that meets multiple times during the year with a shared purpose of learning and serving. The District Teacher Forum aims to develop teacher leadership. The organizational structure of each District Teacher Forum may vary slightly according to the needs and desires of the teachers making it up. However, each Forum agrees to continue the positive and professional spirit of the State Teacher Forum.

What Does A Teacher Forum Do?

South Carolina Teacher Forum:

- Participate in discussions on educational issues
- Dialogue with key leaders about educational issues
- Recognize state and district teachers of the year
- Provide teachers a voice in educational issues
- Impact the professional development of all teachers
- Develop teacher leadership

How does a Forum support the development of leaders?

Dynamics that contribute to leader self-identification and development:

- Collaboration
- Need to verbalize
- Individualized learning
- Context and content
- Reflection
- Committees and groups
- Favorable rewards and job conditions
- Self-Contributors
- Social systems and collaboration
- Challenges
- Norm of reciprocity
- Personal, proxy, and collective agency
- Fairness and opportunity
- Supervisor and leadership support

Benefits of a Teacher Forum

To Teachers:

- Emphasizes professionalism and teacher leadership
- Expands teachers' visions beyond a single classroom in a particular building
- Generates energy and ideas as teachers assess and seek ways to improve education
- Improves working relationships among teachers, administrators, and policymakers
- Provides an avenue or means to make constructive suggestions and specific recommendations to key policymakers and administrators
- Encourages teachers to become proactive in the educational process rather than reactive
- Increases knowledge of professional community, educational policy, and discipline-related knowledge
- Promotes communication between teachers across grades, subjects, buildings, districts, and perhaps even geographic boundaries

To Administrators:

- Provides the teachers' perspective on policy decisions
- Creates a sense of partnership among teachers, administrators, and policymakers
- Emphasizes professionalism and teacher leadership
- Encourages teachers to utilize knowledge and skills to work for continued instructional effectiveness
- Gains teacher support through a broader understanding of total school operations and management
- Enhances collaboration among staff
- Promotes teacher utilization and application of current research for educational improvement

To Students and Parents:

- Provides professional teaching expertise and classroom leadership
- Creates a positive school climate and learning environment
- Stimulates discovery of unique ways to meet student needs
- Encourages cooperation among school personnel, parents, community, policymakers, and students
- Enhances teachers' ability to learn about and use the latest educational research and techniques
- Provides and supports teacher leadership to assist in making educational decisions

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