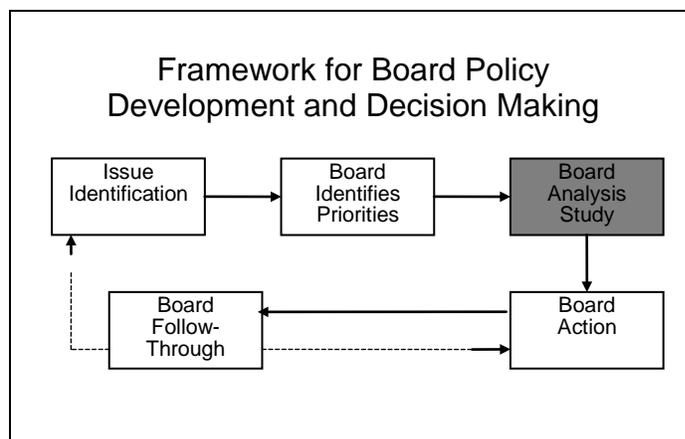


# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

September 26, 2013



**Agenda Item:** Overview of Iowa State Education Association Report on Teacher Leadership and Iowa Department of Education Update on the Development of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System

**Iowa Goals:** Goal 1: All children will enter school ready to learn.  
Goal 2: All PK-12 students will achieve at a high level.

**State Board Role/ Authority:** The State Board promotes education reform designed to improve student achievement. Teacher Leadership and Compensation are key components of this reform.

**Presenters:** Mary Jane Cobb, President  
Iowa State Education Association

Iowa State Education Association Representatives

Ryan Wise, Director of Strategic Initiatives  
Office of the Director

**Attachments:** 2

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the State Board hear and discuss this information.

**Background:** Hundreds of Iowa State Education Association members participated in an online idea exchange which sought to answer the question, "How would you envision a greater role for teacher leadership in schools?" The exchange was monitored by VIVA (Voice Ideas Vision Action) Teachers, a nonprofit organization whose goal is to raise teachers' voices in education policy.

The suggested ideas were distilled into four major recommendations coupled with 17 proposed solutions for creating Teacher Leadership roles that would lead to improved student learning. These recommendations and solutions were released in a report entitled *Re-Imagining School Leadership for the 21st Century*.

The four major recommendations include:

- Select Teacher Leaders based on input from teachers and administrators.
- Clearly define the roles of Teacher Leaders.
- Make Teacher Leaders a conduit to better professional development.
- Ensure that teachers are compensated appropriately and that their students are not harmed by the extra time dedicated to Teacher Leader duties.

The teacher leadership and compensation legislation created a **four-year process** to develop a statewide teacher leadership and compensation system, which largely aligns with many of the key recommendation from *Re-Imagining School Leadership for the 21st Century*. In the first year, the 2013-14 school year, the Legislature has appropriated **\$3.5 million for planning grants** that each school district will use to facilitate a local decision-making process (which should include administrators, teachers, and parents and guardians of students) to design a teacher leadership system that meets the requirements of the legislation and considers the local context. The planning process was officially launched this month.



# Re-Imagining School Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

A COLLABORATIVE REPORT FROM THE MEMBERS  
OF THE VIVA ISEA TEACHERS IDEA EXCHANGE

**Abstract & Summation:** Members of the Iowa State Education Association from across the state spent hundreds of hours debating what roles teachers could play as leaders in their schools and districts and how best to compensate Teacher Leaders for those roles. Then, a small group of the participants distilled those ideas into 17 solutions for creating Teacher Leader roles that would lead to improved student learning.

**Partner:** Iowa State Education Association

[www.vivateachers.org](http://www.vivateachers.org)





## THE VIVA ISEA TEACHERS IDEA EXCHANGE

# Introduction



The VIVA (Voice Ideas Vision Action) ISEA Teachers Idea Exchange invited all members of the Iowa State Education Association to share their professional expertise about what leadership roles teachers can and should play in a school or district and how those roles should be compensated. This VIVA Idea Exchange occurred during a pivotal time in Iowa, as the state grapples with these issues.

The online VIVA Idea Exchange uses a combination of technology operated by New Voice Strategies and powered by SocialSphere. Facilitation is provided by veteran journalist Cindy Richards to ensure the conversation is safe, productive and available whenever teachers are.

The VIVA ISEA Teachers Idea Exchange was open from October 8, 2012–October 30, 2012.

### **The VIVA ISEA Teachers Idea Exchange was conducted in three phases:**

During **Phase I**, all members of the Iowa State Education Association were invited to share their ideas in answer to these questions:

*“How would you envision a greater role for teacher leadership in your school or district and what needs to change in school culture to motivate educators to take on a bigger leadership role? How would it help students if educators had a bigger leadership role in schools and what do you think is the appropriate reward system for educators who step up to leadership roles?”*

In response, 316 members added 81 ideas and shared 111 comments with one another.

During **Phase II**, seven teachers whose active participation in Phase I was clear in terms of both quantity and quality were invited to join The VIVA ISEA Teachers Writing Collaborative. Their assignment: Take the ideas presented during Phase I and summarize and synthesize them into discrete, workable recommendations for building a better system for choosing Teacher Leaders and rewarding teacher leadership in Iowa.

**Phase III** of the process began on December 8, 2012, when the members of the Writing Collaborative presented their ideas to the board of the Iowa State Education Association and continues on December 19, 2012, when they present their ideas to members of Governor Brandstad’s administration.

At New Voice Strategies, we believe in the inspiration that grows from pragmatic experience and in the power of individual voices to make big change. VIVA Teachers is one example of that power in action. We are inspired by the teachers and grateful for their positive contribution to the strength of our schools and America’s democratic process. Many thanks to the VIVA ISEA Teacher Leaders: **Sara Arnold, JP Claussen, Sarah Hogan, Melissa Hageman, Andrew Rasmussen, Lynnette Rochford,** and **Nicolette Theodore-Moad**, whose bios can be found at the end of this report. The innumerable hours these teachers spent grappling with big ideas and small details made this work possible.

We wish to thank our partners in this endeavor, the **Iowa State Education Association**.





## THE VIVA ISEA TEACHERS IDEA EXCHANGE

# Executive Summary

Schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century cannot be run by principals alone. The stakes—the education of our children and the future of our state—are too high. We must tap the best and brightest among us to be school leaders if we are to give all students the high quality education they deserve.

The leaders of the state of Iowa have recognized this and are looking for ways to entice teachers to take on more leadership responsibilities within schools. We know that teachers are ready for this new challenge. The key is to create a system that allows them to stay firmly rooted in the classroom while also working to meet the bigger needs of the school or district overall.

This report lays out 17 ideas for ways to make Teacher Leadership a sought-after and effective way to run schools. By creating a role for teachers that is something more than classroom instruction but something less than administration, the state can get the best of both worlds: teachers who remain committed to serving their students while also sharing their skills and expertise with others. That is the way to grow the leadership needed to ensure student learning improves.

### **Among our recommendations are these:**

- To be successful, Teacher Leaders must have the confidence of faculty members and administrators. That would be much more likely happen if the Teacher Leaders were chosen via a process that includes input from both teachers and administrators.
- While there are many potential Teacher Leadership roles in school—among them modeling best instructional practice, mentoring new teachers, liaising with families, and helping teachers prepare for their evaluations—all roles must be clearly defined to ensure they do not cross into the realm of purely administrative tasks.
- Teacher Leaders can provide a low-cost, more effective professional development by using their unique positions in the school or district to disseminate best practice ideas and differentiate professional development to fit the needs of each individual teacher and school.
- Teacher Leaders, Teacher Mentors, and Model Teachers can be effective only if they know that their students will continue to thrive academically while their teachers are away performing Teacher Leadership duties. This can easily be accomplished through a variety of approaches, including hiring “permanent subs” for a building or district and bringing in retired teachers as subs.
- Teacher Leaders must be compensated adequately for the additional time they spend fulfilling their leadership duties.



# Index of Actionable Ideas

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## RECOMMENDATION 1

### Select Teacher Leaders Based on Input from Teachers and Administrators

#### Proposed Solution:

1. Create a Locally-Determined Process for Choosing the Best Teacher Leader Candidates that Includes Teacher Input
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## RECOMMENDATION 2

### Clearly Define the Roles of Teacher Leaders

#### Proposed Solutions:

2. Assign Model Teachers to Model Instructional Practices
  3. Use Teacher Leaders as a Resource for Promoting Best Practice
  4. Make Teacher Leaders a Bridge Between Teachers and Administration
  5. Task Teacher Leaders with Liaising Between the School and Families
  6. Make the Teacher Leader the Point Person on Developing Instructional Strategies for Common Core Implementation
  7. Pair Teacher Mentors with First- and Second-Year Teachers and Teachers in Need of Additional Support
  8. Assign Teacher Leaders to Help Teachers Prepare for Performance Evaluation
- 

## RECOMMENDATION 3

### Make Teacher Leaders a Conduit to Better Professional Development

#### Proposed Solutions:

9. Include Teacher Leaders in Planning Professional Development for the School or District
  10. Use Teacher Leaders as a Professional Development Resource
  11. Combine and Coordinate School Resources as Needed
  12. Use Teacher Leaders as Facilitators for Consortia of Content-Specific Teachers
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## RECOMMENDATION 4

### Ensure Teachers Are Compensated Appropriately and Their Students Are Not Harmed by the Extra Time Dedicated to Teacher Leader Duties

#### Proposed Solutions:

13. Allocate Sufficient Funds to Ensure That All Teacher Leaders Are Compensated Adequately for the Time They Spend on Teacher Leader Duties
  14. Limit the Adverse Impact on Students When Teacher Leaders Are Performing Their Leadership Duties
  15. Hire Qualified Building-Wide or District-Wide Substitutes
  16. Bring Back Retired Teachers to Support Teachers and Students
  17. Give New Teachers, Teacher Mentors and Teacher Leaders Additional Compensated Time
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## Overview

Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes more than a principal to lead a school. Finding ways to encourage teachers to become school leaders, compensating them for the additional work, and ensuring that they stay firmly connected to the classroom are keys to improving student learning and raising the quality of public education across the state of Iowa.

Readers of this report will find suggestions on ways that adding positions for Teacher Leader, Teacher Mentor and Model Teacher might work in Iowa school districts, ranging from small rural districts to large urban districts. The teachers working on this report represent a variety of districts. It is our hope as we continue this discussion that choices will be offered to districts so they may craft what works best for them and achieve our shared goal: improved student learning.

An underlying assumption throughout this process has been that the state will have to allocate additional money to ensure that any fundamental change to our educational system does not overburden local school districts. Current funding structures should remain in place so that the transition toward the vision offered in this recommendation can be a smooth one. In any major change to a system there will be bumps along the road, and every effort must be made so that these changes, above all else, do no harm to students. This will mean ongoing discussion, sensible tweaks and changes, recognition of successes and failures, and a steady, predictable stream of funding that keeps pace with our educational needs.

As we considered the ideas teachers put forth via the **VIVA ISEA Teachers Idea Exchange**, we realized that teachers are passionate about leading their schools, provided it doesn't require them to give up their first love: teaching students. Thus, this report does not speak to teachers who strive to leave the classroom and join the ranks of administration. Rather, it speaks to, and about, teachers who want to continue to do the best for the students in their classrooms, but who also want to share their knowledge and skills throughout the building to help every student in every classroom get the best education possible.

We believe our suggestions will improve upon what is already in place in school districts across the state. This is not to say that we would like to replace the current positions or repurpose the money spent on them. We value what principals, curriculum specialists, and area education staff provide and we emphasize that their work must continue to be fully funded each year. We seek to begin, in earnest, a thorough and deep conversation about how we can better collaborate, as teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists, area education agency staff, and taxpayers to improve student learning—additional work that will require additional funding. Iowa's tradition of educational excellence and our commitment to our students is reflected in many aspects of Iowa Code. Minimum teacher salaries, evaluations, Teacher Quality Committees, allowable growth, mentoring, intensive assistance, Common Core, even the recent additions of peer review and collaboration; all distribute education funds in a way that attempts to help teachers inspire our students toward better understanding of themselves and the world around them.

These systems have been adopted over the years, in a piecemeal fashion, often with little to no guidance to local districts. Iowa's tradition of local control and local negotiation has served us very well over the years. This report offers a framework that provides local districts with the funds and policies they need to bargain these changes locally with local associations. Where there are specific suggestions, these should be viewed through a local lens. How will this work in each individual district? We need to be sure every district is, indeed, able to provide the level of support and attention their students need to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

To explain how we see Teacher Leadership working, we would like borrow a term popular with educators: differentiation. When teachers write lesson plans that consider the needs of their individual students and tailor lessons to meet the needs of all of their students that is called "differentiation." That system, which works so well for students, would work equally well for teachers. As educators and learners, we want to be guided in our professional development by people who practice in the field, by people who have tried various methods and understand how to implement them in numerous situations. The conundrum is that while we are preparing for our own classrooms, teaching and assessing our students, we don't really have the time and energy to devote to aiding our colleagues. The current system creates a situation in which teaching is one of the most isolated professions, even though we are surrounded by our colleagues.

Increasing the number of Teacher Leaders available in any school at any given time, we believe, would provide teachers with a mentor or leader, indeed a coach, who would be able to assess their individual strengths and weaknesses and support them as they address their particular challenges. By creating a "differentiated" plan for capitalizing on those strengths and shoring up the weaknesses, teachers would feel supported, and would have access to the most important resource in the educational field: experience. That is the way to ensure every student in Iowa has the best teacher possible. Teacher Leadership should be differentiated among Teacher Leaders (who might take on broad responsibilities aimed at improving instructional practice and act as a bridge between teachers and administrators and between the school and parents), Teacher Mentors (who might be a retired teacher and who would focus on working with new teachers and teachers in need of additional support), and Model Teachers (who would model good instructional practice for their colleagues).

To remain true to the vision of providing differentiated support to the teaching staff, Teacher Leaders would also connect the career teacher with resources and improvements to lessons that have proven to be successful in other classrooms. Career teachers look for the next, logical step to build upon what they are already doing in the classroom. Teacher Leaders who work in the same district with the rest of the staff would have an understanding about what is already in place and what the career teachers need to move forward. Teacher Leaders would be the conduit through which professional development flows, both ways. The Teacher Leader will have the connection to the classroom and the connection to their colleagues.

Along with having time and resources to find and foster professional development opportunities, other duties of Teacher Leaders would include visiting classrooms of career teachers as well as teachers new to the profession to aid in the implementation of ideas, celebrate successes, identify challenges, etc.

This need for more Teacher Leadership in every school will grow ever more critical as we move to the new Common Core State Standards and new assessments. These new standards can be only as successful as the teachers who implement them in every classroom across the state. That will require effective professional development, more classroom support, and the expertise of our best veteran teachers.

Clearly, Teacher Leadership can be broadly defined. Should a district choose to assign all of these roles, it would be the equivalent of one or more full-time positions. Because we believe strongly that a Teacher Leader can be more effective if he or she spends at least half-time in the classroom teaching, it may require a school or district to appoint more than one Teacher Leader.

None of the proposals set forth in this report can succeed without a critical component: assurance that our students will not be harmed. For that reason, we set out ideas for ways to use substitute teachers and bring back retired teachers to cover the classrooms while Teacher Leaders are serving in other capacities in the school. Iowa's best teachers are the ones who are most committed to their students. They will not willingly move into leadership roles until they are convinced their students will continue to thrive academically despite their periodic absences.

One way to do that is to turn to one of the state's greatest resources: retired Iowa teachers. These experienced, effective teachers could cover instruction while the Teacher Leaders are out of the classroom. In addition, retired teachers could serve as mentors to new teachers as well as to experienced teachers in need of additional support. They might even be invited to apply to become Teacher Leaders themselves, working on professional development or family involvement activities.

Finally, we believe that Teacher Leadership deserves to be fairly compensated. This cannot become a system in which a few favorite teachers are rewarded with plum assignments. Nor can it become another case in which committed teachers "volunteer" to take on more responsibility because it is in the best interests of the school or their students. Designing a program in which funds are devoted to providing time for the Teacher Leader to prepare and deliver the support program is critical. Teacher Leaders must be chosen on merit, their roles must be clearly defined as separate from the administration, and they must be adequately rewarded for their service. Once chosen, a Teacher Leader's performance should be evaluated after their first year of service, and then on the standard evaluation schedule.

Our proposals are not meant to be a “one size fits all” model. Each school district will need to have earnest discussions about what their needs are. Those needs may change over time, as the writers of this report know from their personal experience. One member’s district has been cutting staff over the past few years while another member’s district hired a large number of new teachers for this school year. Clearly, these districts have very different needs for Teacher Leadership—in terms of the numbers of Teacher Leaders needed, the jobs they will be asked to perform and the levels of Teacher Leadership required.

Administrators and teachers in each school district will need to sit down and negotiate what the job descriptions for Teacher Leaders, Teacher Mentors and Model Teachers will include. Many districts will need more than one Teacher Leader. Some districts will need to share Teacher Leaders.

Great teachers are a resource that must be tapped more fully if the state of Iowa is going to achieve our goal of improving education. Governor Branstad has stated:

*“We must have a renewed commitment to provide the best education in the world. Providing Iowa’s children with a globally competitive education is key to their future—and the future of this state.”*

We believe that implementing the ideas included in this report will help us achieve that worthwhile goal.



## RECOMMENDATION 1

### Select Teacher Leaders Based on Input from Teachers and Administrators

#### Statement of the Problem

The roles Teacher Leaders will play—liaisons between principals and staff, facilitators of staff training and retention, and models of effective teaching practices—all require a maximum amount of trust from both the administration and the faculty. In addition, Teacher Leaders should be respected in their buildings, be able to maneuver the delicate line between support and evaluation, and act as a bridge between faculty and administration. Principals would need full confidence that the staff truly respects and appreciates what the Teacher Leaders have to offer in terms of support and guidance. In turn, principals need to trust that the Teacher Leaders are able to fulfill the varied duties, and have the temperament and approach that best fits their buildings.

To ensure a thorough review and to be certain that the best possible candidates are chosen, the administration and the staff should provide balanced consideration in the selection of Teacher Leader candidates. We suggest one possible system for choosing the Teacher Leaders(s) below. However, current systems may be in place in districts and schools around the state that would provide for a balanced and locally accepted approach to the selection of Teacher Leaders. Teacher Quality Committees, Faculty Advisory Councils, mandatory mentoring programs, all of these are examples of existing structures that could be utilized to meet the level of input from both staff and administration to ensure the efficacy of the position of Teacher Leaders, mentors, master teachers, etc.

Districts and locals across the state are beginning to bargain peer review and collaboration language in their districts. Through bargaining and implementation over time districts will learn how best to integrate peer review and collaboration so that it supports teachers. This report does not go so far as to recommend reworking current code so that all of Iowa's piecemeal education initiatives work efficiently together, however, should that become part of the process we need to be sure, as we change out the bathwater, we don't lose the baby.

#### Proposed Solution

##### 1. Create a Locally-Determined Process for Choosing the Best Teacher Leader Candidates that Includes Teacher Input

Each district would choose the system that works best in that district, a system that would be developed at the bargaining table in negotiations with the local association. We believe strongly that the key to a successful Teacher Leadership model is choosing the right Teacher Leader—someone who has the respect of the teachers as well as the administrators.

As one example, a selection process could look like the three-step approach described below. This process relies, first and foremost, on having a “collaborative teaching partner” who knows a candidate well. At the beginning of each school year, the principal would assign each teacher in the building a “collaborative teaching partner.”





These two teachers would have a special working relationship over the course of the school year during which they would spend time observing one another in the classroom, attend professional development together, and have time allocated to discuss student achievement, classroom successes, challenges, and other needs.

**Step 1:** The district or school would establish a Teacher Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of an odd number of teachers (5, 7, or 9) selected by the staff. This TAC would review applications from classroom teachers interested in becoming Teacher Leaders and vote on them. This is a critical first step because Teacher Leaders who do not have the support of the other faculty in the building cannot be as effective as those who do. Applicants who win a simple majority of the TAC votes would move on to Step 2.

**Step 2:** Building administrators would review the approved candidates and, as a group, say “yes” or “no” to determine who will move on to Step 3.

**Step 3:** Each application would be reviewed by the applicant’s collaborative teaching partner. The peer partner would have one “yes” or “no” vote based on personal experience spent working closely with that teacher over the course of the school year. This would allow for valuable insight into how an applicant for a Teacher Leader position works with colleagues.

At the end of the process, any applicant who has at least two “yes” votes would be eligible for appointment as a Teacher Leader. If there are multiple applicants, the school district or school would conduct interviews to determine who (and how many) would serve as Teacher Leaders and in what role. The interview team would consist of one member from each committee. The final decision would be made by the principal who would consider, in good faith, the input of the teachers on the interview team.

## Why We Believe This Will Work

Teacher Leaders can only be successful if they are trusted by everyone in the building. For that reason, it is critical that the process for choosing Teacher Leaders also is a trusted one that involves both teachers and administrators. How exactly to do that will differ according to the needs of each local school and district. The example we suggest is just one possible way to ensure a balanced approach to choosing Teacher Leaders. We present it in the hope that it offers a jumping off point for local districts to negotiate what works best in their situation. Once the Teacher Leader(s) are identified, they can collaborate with the Principal to identify the best candidates to be Teacher Mentors and Model Teachers.





## RECOMMENDATION 2

### Clearly Define the Roles of Teacher Leaders

#### Statement of the Problem

“Teacher Leader” can mean different things in different districts. It is important to negotiate exactly what the job should entail and the number of Teacher Leaders needed to tackle all of these challenges. It is also important to clarify how the roles of Teacher Leaders both complement and are differentiated from the roles of administrators.

We imagine the role of a Teacher Leader to be very much like that of a team coach. Using this sports analogy, the Principal would be the General Manager who has the ability to hire and fire and uses evaluation as a tool to aid in the assessment of how each teacher is functioning in her building. The Teacher Leader, then, would be Coach, the person who really knows how to get the best out of the teachers. The Coach identifies the role models on her team, and uses their successes to inspire the other players. The Coach helps young players work on their game, and points them toward resources and techniques to do that, including her own team of assistant coaches (Teacher Mentors and Model Teachers).

#### Proposed Solutions

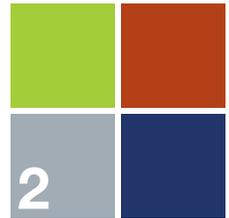
##### 2. Assign Model Teachers to Model Instructional Practices

The strength of a good Teacher Leader is the ability to identify good teaching in every curricular area. Good teaching is a certain set of skills, and a Teacher Leader knows it when he or she sees it, regardless of subject area. However, you wouldn’t send a science teacher into a band room to model best practices. So whenever possible, we recommend Model Teachers in work in subject-area consortia, working across schools within a district if necessary.

Being an effective Model Teacher requires keeping abreast of the latest developments in the field of education, which likely will mean that he or she would need additional professional development days to learn about new instructional practices that have been shown to work, such as teaching to multiple intelligences, differentiation, multisensory learning, and intelligence types (left vs. right brain). Model Teachers would continue to work in their own classrooms, allowing other teachers to observe their process, or go into another teacher’s classroom to model the process there.

The Model Teacher should be able to show others how to teach in the way that would be most effective for each student. This includes: promoting a safe learning environment, differentiating instruction within the class, and managing time on task to increase student learning, thus decreasing the use of disciplinary procedures. All teachers need to do this while maintaining a challenging curriculum to ensure our students are prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Through this challenging curriculum, a Model Teacher also needs to be able to model the best ways to implement the school’s mission statement in teaching, use student collaboration, facilitate learning groups, model project-based learning to keep students actively engaged, teach higher-level thinking skills to promote problem solving, and know the state standards.





### **3. Use Teacher Leaders as a Resource for Promoting Best Practice**

The Teacher Leader role in promoting best instructional practice should be to communicate, collaborate, observe, and support their colleagues. The Teacher Leader must be allowed to attend conferences related to new teaching practices, technology, and other information pertinent to teaching, and be given time to share that relevant information with colleagues throughout the school. These Teacher Leaders should also send out regular emails to teachers with information about upcoming workshops and conferences offered through the AEA, ISEA or other certified providers, as well as important teacher tools to be integrated into classes—whether they are new tools or reiterating tools already discussed and learned.

Teacher Leaders also should be supporting colleagues who want to attend professional conferences. They can help identify cohorts of teachers who would benefit from attending conferences, then help those teachers find funds, arrange travel, and write reports identifying how attending the conference fits into their district’s and building’s Comprehensive School Improvement Plan.

Because we believe it is critical for Teacher Leaders to remain in the classroom at least half time to maintain their ties to students and to clearly delineate the difference between Teacher Leaders and administrators, it is unlikely all of these roles can be performed by one person. For that reason, schools and districts should consider choosing multiple Teacher Leaders, sharing those Teacher Leaders across schools within a district, and/or creating tiers of Teacher Leadership that would include Teacher Mentors and Model Teachers.

If only one teacher is available to take on all of these Teacher Leadership roles—the equivalent of one full-time position—that person should be allowed to take on the Teacher Leader role as a sabbatical from teaching as a one-year assignment outside of the classroom. That Teacher Leader would then return to the classroom after a finite period of time. While it is preferable to have teachers in the classroom at least half-time, this is a possible alternative that would allow teacher a “tour of duty” away from the classroom for a time.

Taking on substantial responsibilities, additional time, and the temporary shift of focus away from the classroom would require additional compensation. This should largely be determined by local school districts and associations.

### **4. Make Teacher Leaders a Bridge Between Teachers and Administration**

Teacher Leaders are in a unique position not only to help teachers improve their practice, but also to inform the administration of what teachers need to be more successful. For example, Teacher Leaders can be the ambassadors who support a teacher’s request for specific professional development. Or they can explain to the administration what teachers need if they are going to successfully model project-based learning or teach higher-level thinking skills. These are the kinds of things students need, but teachers might be afraid to request help for fear they will be seen as lacking in ability if they can’t figure out how to do it on their own.



## 5. Task Teacher Leaders with Liaising Between the School and Families

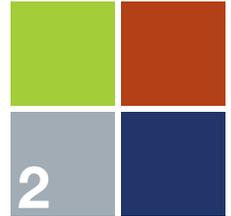
Through teacher-teacher collaboration, teachers are able to work together to set and achieve common goals, create and incorporate new teaching strategies into their classrooms, and extend their learning and experiences to one another to help create new experiences and ideas for students. Through teacher-family collaboration, teachers and parents/guardians work together to find the best ways to reach individual students. By working closely with parents as a group, the Teacher Leader can facilitate that school-family partnership. By working with individual teachers and parents, the Teacher Leader can help fellow teachers understand how to collaborate with parents/guardians to gain valuable insights about the student's home life and values, while families have the opportunity to come into the school to engage themselves with their student learners.

Parental support could make a notable difference in the lives of so many of our struggling students. Building trust and open communication between our teachers and parents is one way to improve our schools. A Teacher Leader would help build positive relationships while actually educating parents who may not be aware of the high standards set forth in the Common Core. Having a liaison between the school and families would take some pressure off both the teachers and the parents.



**Lynnette Rochford**

*In our school, the guidance counselor and at-risk teacher have done a good job of trying to plan and facilitate events at school where parents are invited to share part of a day with their child or spend some after-school or evening time at school with their child—"Muffins and Moments with Moms" and "Doughnuts with Dads." However, the guidance counselor and at-risk teacher are spread very thin and are working tirelessly with agencies outside of the school to help our troubled families. In our community there are many families in crisis, and these counselors and at-risk teachers can't possibly meet the needs of every family. Giving some of the responsibility of planning and facilitating family involvement events to the Teacher Leaders would take some of the pressure off. Many hands make light work, and it takes a village to raise a child.*



## **6. Make the Teacher Leader the Point Person on Developing Instructional Strategies for Common Core Implementation**

As the curriculum and instructional/classroom specialist, the Teacher Leader is the best person to take the lead on Common Core, guiding others in the inclusion of Core standards in their planning. The Teacher Leader should be able to provide professional learning support to other teachers within the district. Not only should the Teacher Leader focus on the Common Core content, but the Teacher Leader should also look at the Iowa assessment on which the students will be expected to successfully perform so they can work backward to identify key student performance tasks.

## **7. Pair Teacher Mentors with First- and Second-Year Teachers and Teachers in Need of Additional Support**

Effective mentoring can help schools recruit new teachers and retain existing teachers. The mentoring would help new teachers find a way to take their academic knowledge and translate it into real classroom activities and instruction. Teacher Mentors can provide new teachers with information pertaining to district policies and procedures and help them get acclimated to the district.

For example, new teachers spend hours trying to figure out how to do what experienced teachers do automatically. Developing lessons, finding time to contact parents—and knowing how best to do that—getting to know school staff and resources, and finding time to collaborate with Special Education teachers about accommodations (including how to effectively participate in an IEP meeting) are all areas that inexperienced teachers struggle with. The Teacher Mentor would greatly benefit these new teachers by taking some of the burden off of them and by helping to build the school/student/parent relationship that is so vital to a healthy school setting.

For existing teachers, mentoring would provide an extra set of hands and eyes that could help a struggling teacher succeed or a good teacher improve. Students and families would benefit because teachers would be working together in the best interests of students.

Effective mentoring can help all areas of our education system. College institutions would benefit by a mentoring system that would help smooth the transition from college student into classroom teacher. School administrators would benefit from mentoring because it would help with teacher recruitment and retention. The more comfortable a new teacher feels within the district, the more likely he or she is to enjoy teaching and stay on staff.

However, having teachers collaborate just a few times each semester is not an effective use of mentoring. It must happen often and it must happen efficiently.



**Melissa Hageman**

*As a teacher fairly new to the education system, I have seen what both effective and ineffective mentoring can look like. My first two years as a 5–12 band director, my district required that I have a mentor. This mentor was supposed to help me feel comfortable in the district and answer my questions when they arose. However, my mentor was the K–12 general music and choir teacher. Neither of us had a prep time, and both had before- and after-school lessons with our students. There was rarely a time when we were able to get together for him to help me. Since we were rarely able to meet, I didn't feel very comfortable approaching him with questions or problems I was facing in the classroom, so I struggled through my first two years at that district and then sought employment elsewhere. This is what ineffective mentoring looks like when we don't put the resources needed in place to help young teachers.*

## 8. Assign Teacher Leaders to Help Teachers Prepare for Performance Evaluation

Principals are tasked with evaluating teachers and documenting how the 43 benchmarks have been met. Administrators' schedules, however, allow these to be done only in a piecemeal fashion. Therefore, teachers could benefit from supportive, constructive feedback provided by someone we know has our best interests—and those of our students—at heart. For that reason, it is critical that Teacher Leaders not be pulled into state-mandated administrator evaluations. If the Teacher Leader is charged with evaluating a teacher's performance for the state-mandated system, it would undermine the trust that must develop between a Teacher Leader and a teacher in need of support.

Therefore, the Teacher Leader should be asked to observe a teacher and offer feedback that is nonjudgmental and aimed solely at helping the teacher improve. The only acceptable roles for Teacher Leaders in state-mandated evaluation should be helping prepare teachers for the evaluations and helping them write their professional growth plans and goals—roles administrators rarely have time to tackle.

### Why We Believe This Will Work

We believe these roles will be accepted in the schools across the state because they were selected to fill what teachers and principals often mention as gaps in the current educational system. The Teacher Leader, Teacher Mentor and Model Teacher could be valuable resources offering a wealth of instructional support to educators across the state by modeling instructional practices, encouraging the sharing of best practices, collaborating between the school and families, being a curriculum and instructional/classroom specialist, evaluating teachers from a supportive perspective, and providing supportive mentoring for all teachers. This role of educator support will help teachers move toward the Iowa Common Core, help with teacher retention and recruitment, and help teachers become the best and most effective educators they can be.



## RECOMMENDATION 3

### Make Teacher Leaders a Conduit to Better Professional Development

#### Statement of the Problem

With the time constraints placed on school administrators, it is difficult for them to be able to differentiate professional development for teachers. The need will grow even more critical with the high demands being placed upon teachers and administrators in conjunction with the implementation of Common Core. Just as students need differentiated instruction that meets their individual needs and learning styles, teachers would benefit from differentiated professional development—a need that overworked administrators are hard-pressed to meet. Teacher Leaders can assist in providing this important professional development to our staff.

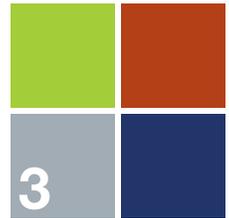
#### Proposed Solutions

##### 9. Include Teacher Leaders in Planning Professional Development for the School or District

Working with appropriate entities, Teacher Leaders from area schools and/or districts would sort through information from the Iowa Department of Education and create a plan of communication for their district. It is very difficult to remain up to date on new education mandates, professional development opportunities, and other ever-changing details.

As Iowa moves to implement the Common Core and new assessments, we need to evaluate the assessments students will be expected to complete, and use a backward planning model to determine what we need to do to ensure that students understand the material. We need collaboration time to decide what skills students need to apply in the assessment.

Teacher Leaders should have one to two days per month set aside for consortium collaboration time at the AEA or district level. During this time, Teacher Leaders would sort through the information their school or district needs and determine how best to present the information. Teacher Leaders also could identify experts in the field of education who could serve as additional resources for numerous districts and be cost-effective for smaller districts. Planning effective, differentiated professional development would require researching best practices and determining what each grade level, building or teacher needs most urgently in order to make their learning time most meaningful. It could possibly involve designing needs assessments, surveys, and evaluation forms to help in this process and it may require ongoing time throughout the year to collaborate with classroom teachers in a grade level or a particular building which may take time outside of the contract day. It may also include planning parent involvement events after school or on some evenings.



## **10. Use Teacher Leaders as a Professional Development Resource**

A key role for Teacher Leaders would be to spend time in their schools observing teachers and participating in Professional Learning Communities. This is a low-cost approach to professional development. As Teacher Leaders observe new techniques for teaching a lesson or a great idea for keeping students engaged, they can disseminate that great idea throughout the school. We believe there is a wealth of great teaching happening in Iowa schools. Too often, however, it stays behind the closed door of a classroom. By charging Teacher Leaders with spreading the word about the best practices and brightest ideas already happening in the school, we improve school morale, celebrate what's good in Iowa schools, and make the Teacher Leader a bearer of good tidings—all without busting the professional development budget.

Similarly, Teacher Leaders can become ambassadors for best practices by visiting neighboring schools or districts to share what's working well in other schools and to learn other techniques they can take home and adapt to the needs of their own students.

## **11. Combine and Coordinate School Resources as Needed**

Smaller districts may need to pool their resources and collaboratively hire and share a Teacher Leader to help meet the needs of their students and staff. In smaller districts, the shared Teacher Leader could rotate among the schools on a regular basis, always ensuring that at least half of his or her time is spent in a classroom teaching. This would require professional development schedules to be synced to one another.

## **12. Use Teacher Leaders as Facilitators for Consortia of Content-Specific Teachers**

Content-specific teachers, especially those who work in small schools and districts where they might be the only music teacher or reading specialist, need time to share best practices and learn from one another. Teacher Leaders, working in conjunction with fellow teachers in their AEA, can lead these meetings to ensure teachers are able to share their wealth of resources to help improve student achievement.

To save time and travel, the teachers could meet via an online platform such as Skype. To accommodate this vehicle, teachers from across schools and/or districts would need to be given a common planning period once a week or once every other week. This “virtual” Professional Learning Community would give content-specific teacher peers the same support offered to other teachers during in-person meetings with their PLCs.

## **Why We Believe This Will Work**

We believe that Teacher Leaders can help reshape professional development to make it more effective and time efficient. Districts around the state of Iowa have already seen the benefits of participating in Professional Learning Communities to improve student achievement. Teacher Leaders would be a valuable asset in the implementation and creation of professional development. If time were provided for collaboration, Teacher Leaders could sift through data and discover effective educational practices. We know that there is not a cookie cutter solution that would work in all schools. Given the time, Teacher Leaders could be a critical asset in choosing and tailoring the right professional development to fit the needs of individual teachers.



## RECOMMENDATION 4

### **Ensure Teachers Are Compensated Appropriately and Their Students Are Not Harmed by the Extra Time Dedicated to Teacher Leader Duties**

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Teachers regularly take on additional tasks they believe are in the best interests of their students. Often, they perform those duties without any additional compensation simply because they are committed to doing whatever it takes to support their students. Rarely do they take on additional roles if they would somehow harm their students. A statewide system relying on Teacher Leaders in an organized way to help improve schools across Iowa cannot achieve its stated goals without a formal structure in place that includes adequate compensation for Teacher Leaders—by definition, the best teachers in the state—and ensures that their students are being taught by a qualified substitute while Teacher Leaders are out of the classroom.

The Task Force on Teacher Leadership and Compensation report, published in October 2012, calls for both a review of existing allocations and additional funds to establish “multiple, meaningful, and well-designed career pathway opportunities.”

It would not be possible to add additional duties, additional responsibilities and additional pathways without additional funds. Attempting to fundamentally change the way we look at teacher time and compensation without additional resources inevitably would lead to teachers’ taking on “volunteer” roles rather than assuming “leadership” responsibilities. In addition, it would harm students who would find themselves without their regular teacher and moved into classes with ever greater numbers of students, thereby reducing the amount of individual attention they would get from whatever teacher is in front of them on any given day. This is unacceptable and would not result in the desired outcome: improved student performance.

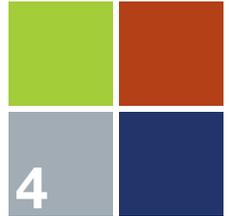
#### **Proposed Solutions**

##### **13. Allocate Sufficient Funds to Ensure That All Teacher Leaders Are Compensated Adequately for the Time They Spend on Teacher Leader Duties.**

Like it or not, in our society, the value of something is linked to its price tag. If we value the contribution of Teacher Leaders, Teacher Mentors and Model Teachers to improving the level of education across the state of Iowa, we must compensate Teacher Leaders for that work. That is how we will communicate to the teachers and to the public that Teacher Leadership is important to the future of Iowa education.

How much is adequate compensation? Ultimately this should be bargained locally, where districts and local associations best understand their particular needs. Pay would be based on the roles each Teacher Leader, Teacher Mentor and Model Teacher would play in the school or district, but each is entitled to some increase in compensation to reflect the additional duties, responsibilities, and time required to perform these Teacher Leadership roles.





In general, pay for Teacher Leaders should equal at least a 10% differential to that of a regular classroom teacher. This could be achieved in a number of ways, but should not affect resources already allocated via the Allowable Growth formula, which allows smaller districts to keep pace with their larger, growing urban counterparts.

The extra duties of Teacher Mentors and Model Teachers would mostly revolve around the classroom, observing new teachers, using separate pull-out time and professional development time to discuss observations, prepare for evaluations, and deal with the day-to-day responsibilities of being a Teacher Mentor and Model Teacher. These duties would require substantially less additional time than the duties of a Teacher Leader, but still would require some additional time. We believe compensation for these more clearly defined roles should be paid on a per-diem basis in the form of an Extra Service Contract. For example, if a teacher makes \$55,000 per year for 190 days of service (approximately \$290 per day), and commits to leadership duties that require the equivalent of an additional 10 days of service, it would add \$2,900 to that teacher's annual pay.

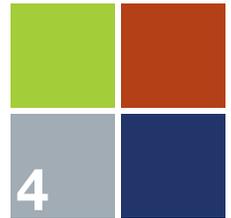
Like Teacher Leaders, we believe Teacher Mentors and Model Teachers would only be willing to take on those roles if they are assured their students are in good hands during their teacher's absence. So it is critical that the districts provide sufficient funds not only to pay the teachers for their additional duties, but also to minimize the impact to the Teacher Mentor and Model Teachers' classrooms.

Unless teachers can be paid as professionals, and compensated for the additional tasks they take on as Teacher Leaders, it likely would lead to further "piling on," and run the risk of being perceived by educators as just another "phase" that will come and go without having any major impact on improving student learning.

#### **14. Limit the Adverse Impact on Students When Teacher Leaders Are Performing Their Leadership Duties**

Teacher Leaders need to keep feet in the classroom. The efficacy of this approach to Teacher Leadership requires that these leaders be teachers who are currently offering instruction. Any approach that removes the Teacher Leader completely from the classroom would simply create another layer of administrators who might very well be out of touch with changing conditions inside the classroom.

The role of a Teacher Leader would, by necessity, require them to be out of their classroom for some period of time to observe and work with other teachers, attend professional development, and perform other non-classroom activities. But it is imperative that a Teacher Leader spend at least half of his or her time in a classroom teaching.



It is equally imperative that when the Teacher Leader, Teacher Mentor, Model Teacher (as well as new and career teachers) need to be out of their classrooms, his or her students are in good hands. That means the district must supply reliable and qualified substitutes who can take over instruction when Teacher Leaders, Teacher Mentors and Model Teachers are performing other duties. We discuss in the next few solutions some ways to address this issue, including by using retired teachers or hiring a school- or district-wide substitute who regularly pinch hits for classroom teachers providing valuable classroom management skills and forming important relationships over time to minimize the disruption of the absence of a regular classroom teacher.

It is important that the implementation of Teacher Leadership and a more robust Teacher Mentor model not become an unfunded mandate that serves only to spread students around to other teachers, making class sizes larger.

The bottom line: An equal FTE should be assigned to a school (in large, more urban districts) or a district (in smaller more rural districts) to ensure that class sizes and number of teachers in the classrooms stay the same. This would lead to hiring additional staff, with the amount of time Teacher Leaders, Teacher Mentors, Model Teachers and other classroom teachers, are out of the classroom built in to a school's FTE. If the total time Teacher Leaders, Teacher Mentors, and Model Teachers are out of the classroom is 1.5 FTE, then an additional 1.5 FTE of staff should be hired to replace them.

The ultimate decision of how many Teacher Leaders, Teacher Mentors, Model Teachers, Career and Apprentice Teachers will be determined by the particulars of the district and will fluctuate based on changing circumstances. It would be assumed that each district would have access to at least the full-time-equivalent Teacher Leader, with the possibility of smaller districts sharing Teacher Leaders between them. Larger districts and buildings may find they need multiple Teacher Leaders. These decisions can be handled, via existing structures such as Teacher Quality Committees and through Negotiated Agreements.

#### **15. Hire Qualified Building-Wide or District-Wide Substitutes**

This idea of a regular, building-wide substitute who can get to know the students is key to helping students in the primary grades adjust to the disruption of having a loved teacher absent from the classroom. In the upper grades and high school, it is key to ensuring students don't lose valuable learning time to a less-well-equipped sub. The substitute also should be available as back-up to ensure Teacher Leaders, Teacher Mentors and Model Teacher still have their allotted planning time to prepare lessons for their own students.

Why is this important? Because not having regular, reliable, and qualified subs is a burden for everyone, from the staff to the students themselves, as the experience of one small school shows (see next page):



**Lynnette Rochford**

*Recently, all of the first grade teachers in our small school were replaced by substitute teachers for a half day so we could collaborate outside of the classroom for professional development. The students did not handle the change very well. An inordinate number of students were sent to the office for behavior issues. Clearly, it will be important to keep as much consistency as possible for our younger students when we consider who will step into the classroom teacher's role when she/he is gone for other duties.*

When these “permanent subs” are not filling in for a Teacher Leader, Teacher Mentor or Model Teacher, they would be the first sub for any other teacher in the building or district. Larger districts would never have a problem keeping these folks working due to the number of absences on any given day. Smaller districts may create roles for these subs that can be performed when there are no absences on a given day, although it is likely any district in the state will have an absence on any given day in elementary, middle or high school. Having permanent subs would also allow substitutes to participate in district professional development, collaborate with teachers who have planned absences, and offer co-teaching support, all with the goal of reducing the impact teacher absences have on the classroom.

#### **16. Bring Back Retired Teachers to Support Teachers and Students**

Retired teachers are a great resource. They can be used in many ways in a school, including mentoring experienced teachers who could use support but would feel more comfortable with someone who is a peer, not generations younger. Retired teachers could be “informal mentors,” assisting in the growth and development of less-experienced educators. And they could be reliable substitutes who would know how to step in to teach a class while a Teacher Leader is away. Retired teachers could be one of the most affordable solutions to the challenge of additional staff that would be needed under this new Iowa Teacher Leadership model.



**Melissa Hageman**

*Also as a band teacher, I have been incredibly blessed to be a part of a wonderful organization called the Iowa Bandmasters Association (IBA). IBA is a state group that includes aspiring college students, current band teachers, and retired directors. This organization has a wonderful mentoring program in which retired directors volunteer their time, experience, and knowledge with first- and second-year teachers. The retired directors go into the classrooms up to four times a year to watch how the new teacher handles his or her classroom, observes, gives constructive feedback, and offers advice on how to improve teaching practice. The retired directors also offer the option of running the band class for a period and allowing the new teacher to observe how a veteran teacher teaches. The mentoring within this association is superb, and is run very closely to how I see the Teacher Mentor fulfilling a mentoring role within their district.*

#### **17. Give New Teachers, Teacher Mentors and Teacher Leaders Additional Compensated Time**

One important role of Teacher Leader or Teacher Mentors would be supporting new teachers. To make this system as effective as possible, it may be reasonable to give teachers new to the profession additional days as well. Because we want new teachers to get up to speed as quickly as possible, it would make sense to set up a system that gives them more time with a Teacher Leader or Teacher Mentor early in the school year, perhaps even before the school year starts.

For example, if Teacher Mentors work an additional 10 days per year, then new teachers would be expected to work an additional five days at the beginning of the school year. The five days would allow a Teacher Mentor to work with multiple new teachers to review best practices, classroom management techniques, room set-up, particulars of individual buildings, and other issues. Currently, in many districts this takes place at the discretion of new teachers and their Teacher Mentors. Often, time is tight as veteran teachers prepare for their own teaching year. The additional days would allow this to happen in a meaningful, more robust way, more likely leading to a successful introduction into the profession.

Again, this is simply one example. Districts will need to decide how best to utilize Teacher Leaders. Time before conferences, time to meet before an evaluation, time for shared professional development, all of these could be effective use of funds for time out of the classroom, or additional compensated time added onto the school year. The purpose is to ensure that time spent away from the classroom, or additional time added to the contract ultimately strengthens what happens in the classroom. Maximum flexibility should be allowed to provide support in an ever changing educational environment.



## Conclusion

Iowa is blessed with good schools. Some are large. Some are small. Some are located in college towns. Some are located in county seats. All of them work to serve their communities to the best of their ability. A very important piece of that service is giving students the best education possible.

Just as teachers and students demonstrate different strengths, so do the schools in our state. Many schools already have strong collaboration and leadership components in place. Schools with well-established Professional Learning Communities in which staff members work together to improve student achievement have it right. In that case, we see the role of a Teacher Leader as an additional support—not someone who would take charge of the Professional Learning Community but as someone who would work side by side with the members. Some schools already have begun the process of hiring Teacher Leaders. The proposals in this report are not meant to dismantle what is in place; rather they are meant to enhance it.

Educators come together when they can see how their efforts will benefit the community, their school district, the staff, parents and most importantly, the students. Putting Teacher Leadership positions in place will take some work. Each district will need to examine what their strengths are, what is missing, and what the next steps need to be. Job descriptions will need to be crafted and positions negotiated. What we know about educators is that they will come together and work on a task when they can see that what they are working toward offers a promise of making things better for all and leads to improved student achievement.

It is our hope that Iowa will invest in Teacher Leadership as an additional level of support for schools, teachers, and students to ensure every school in Iowa is a great school and every student in Iowa gets the best education.



## THE VIVA PROJECT

### The VIVA ISEA Teachers Writing Collaborative

Bios



**SARA ARNOLD** teaches talented and gifted students in the Cedar Rapids public schools. She has taught in the PACT department for two years and previously taught music for 12 years. She has her B.A. from Luther College, her M.S.E. from Drake University in Administration, and her gifted endorsement from the University of Iowa. She has served as a professional community leader in the Cedar Rapids district and implemented professional development for her fellow teachers. She has participated in the Contemporary School Leadership consortium and is constantly making strides to improve the field of education for her students and staff.



**JP CLAUSSEN** has been a Special Education teacher at West High School in Iowa City for the past nine years, working with students who struggle with behavioral and emotional disorders. Prior to receiving his Masters Degree from the University of Iowa in 2004, he was a para educator in a BD classroom. JP is involved locally with the Iowa City Education Association, serving as president for two years and as co-chief negotiator for the past 5 years. In these roles he works to ensure that teachers feel valued and supported in providing the best possible education for students.



**MELISSA HAGEMAN** is in her 5<sup>th</sup> year of teaching band, and her first year as the West Central director. She previously taught in Guthrie Center and in Rockford. A native Iowan, she grew up in Calmar, where her dad (Jeff) drives a truck, her mom (Robin) is a high school cook at South Winneshiek, and her brother is a sophomore at Wartburg College. She graduated from South Winneshiek in 2004, and from Wartburg College in 2008. Hageman and her fiancé, Dustin Franzen, plan to be married July 6, 2013, in Calmar. They live in Oelwein with their puppy, Charlie, and guinea pig, Porkchop.



**SARAH HOGAN** teaches elementary reading for Maquoketa Community Schools. Her career began with working to provide quality center child care as a teacher and a director. This led to an outreach position with Iowa State University as child care consultant. Previous positions held with Maquoketa Schools include kindergarten teacher and coordinator of a grant serving at-risk children. Her husband Randy works for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources so they have lived in state housing in the Boone area and in the Bellevue area. She has a grown son and daughter. Her daughter is the director of a charter school serving the Hispanic community in Chicago.

## THE VIVA PROJECT

### The VIVA ISEA Teachers Writing Collaborative

Bios



**ANDREW RASMUSSEN** has been a teacher in the Des Moines school district for 17 years. He is now serving as the president of the Des Moines Education Association which has more than 2,100 members. Before becoming president, Andrew taught at Callanan Middle School as a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies teacher. He spent one year teaching English to Japanese middle school students in Kofu, Japan. Andrew has been an active member of his local association and has been involved at the state and national levels as well. He also writes a blog on teaching and education issues for the Des Moines Register.



**LYNNETTE ROCHFORD** teaches Title One Reading at Parkside School in Oelwein. She graduated from Upper Iowa University while she and her husband Charlie raised their two daughters. Rochford taught first grade at Sacred Heart before being trained as a Reading Recovery Teacher for the Oelwein Community School District. When she's not busy teaching, planning or learning new skills, Rochford enjoys her family (especially the grandchildren), church and community activities, reading, supporting the arts, being outdoors, traveling and spending time with friends. Rochford, one of ten children in her family, believes that children are our greatest resource and our future.



**NICOLETTE THEODORE-MOAD** teaches preschool in the Burlington Community School District in Burlington, Iowa. Nicolette has been teaching for 16 years in the field of early childhood education. Her experiences range from teaching kindergarten and preschool in public and parochial settings in the inner city of Chicago, suburbs and Southeastern Iowa. She has a Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education from Western Illinois University and is currently pursuing her Master's in Early Childhood Education with a specialization in Teaching and Diversity in Early Childhood Education from Walden University. She is married and has four children ages 16, 13, 12, and 6.

## New Voice Strategies

**New Voice Strategies** is a non-profit corporation founded by **Elizabeth Evans** and **Tom Cosgrove**. New Voice Strategies created WikiWisdom™ to offer leaders a new way to communicate with their stakeholders. Our innovation—the VIVA Idea Exchange, an online peer collaboration platform—plumbs the wisdom of committed people with front-line experience to create consensus on a variety of actionable recommendations. We believe in the power of authentic experience and provide passionate people with an avenue to make a difference.

Our passion is to make their voices heard. In its first year of operation, VIVA Teachers has engaged 2,500 committed classroom teachers in peer-to-peer collaborations. Along with 1,000 of their peers who joined our network, VIVA Teachers offers unvarnished insights into the professional visions and priorities for strengthening America's public schools of classroom teachers from coast to coast.

### Board of Directors

**JILL BASS** taught in the Chicago and New York City public schools for 14 years. She has a master's in instructional leadership from the University of Illinois at Chicago and has been a professional developer, curriculum writer, educational consultant, and instructional coach. She is currently director of the Mikva Challenge's National Center for Action Civics, overseeing curriculum development and teacher training.

**ELIZABETH EVANS**, founding CEO, is a recognized national leader in building unconventional alliances and bringing innovative approaches to solving difficult policy problems. For the last decade, her work has focused on education reform, and she has spent her career promoting the interests of children. She was executive director of the Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS), where she was the chief architect of a successful statewide campaign that culminated with Illinois being the first state in the nation to enact comprehensive charter law reforms in 2009. Before joining INCS, Elizabeth was part of the Illinois Facilities Fund leadership team, where her responsibilities focused on Illinois government relations, communications, and advocacy. Elizabeth also worked at the Civic Committee of The Commercial Club of Chicago and was a political organizer in Washington, DC, and Michigan. She practiced law from 1990 to 1998 for the US Securities and Exchange Commission Enforcement Division and was a staff attorney in the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

**KIPLUND "KIP" KOLKMEIER** is of counsel to the Political Law and Government Relations practice groups of Perkins, Coie, LLC & Kolkmeier Consulting. His legal practice focuses on state legislative lobbying in Illinois, corporate and governmental ethics issues, administrative rulemaking and executive agency lobbying, PAC management, state and federal campaign finance issues, and association management. He previously was a partner at the following law firms: Sidley & Austin, Altheimer & Gray, and Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon.

**ASHLEY WARLICK**, Chair, teaches elementary school in the Cambridge, MA Public Schools. She has a concentration in teaching students with special needs and brings a strong interest in the arts to her work. She serves on the Board of Directors of her school's affiliated nonprofit organization, which brings urgently needed resources to the students at the school.



