

Teacher Leadership

Six Statements of Values and Actions that Define Teachers Aspiring to Lead

Teacher Leaders:

- 1 Convey convictions about a better world.
- 2 Strive for authenticity in their teaching, learning, and assessment practices.
- 3 Facilitate communities of learning through organization-wide processes.
- 4 Confront barriers in the school's culture and structures.
- 5 Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action.
- 6 Nurture a culture of success.

Reference:

Crowther, F., Kaagan, S. S., Ferguson, M. & Hann, L. (2007). *Uncovering teacher leadership: Essays and voices from the field* (pp. 51-63). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Shared Leadership: A Key to Student Achievement in an Underperforming School

By Dr. Pam Robbins and Dr. Ana Ramos-Pell

When the status quo is no longer an option at a struggling school, and the consequence of conformity yields persistent failure, it is time to move to a shared leadership model. Teacher leaders believe that all students can succeed. They also believe that all teachers need collaborative support to help their students realize that goal of success.

Not long ago, this idea was illustrated in dramatic fashion at a Phoenix-area inner city school that had long been struggling with both state and federal academic indicators. All the elements for failure were at work there: A high-density, low Supplemental Education Services population with significant crime and gang-related violence. Students change schools frequently, are 98% English Language Learners, and 94% are qualified for a free lunch program.

Faced with the challenge to improve the school's performance levels, teacher leaders emerged. They then determined that they needed to work collectively, and formed the Instructional Support Team (IST). Together, these leaders developed a process for sharing decision-making and leadership roles. The key was teamwork, teacher leadership, and collaboration across all program areas. They developed a "Response to Intervention" model, which encompassed:

- Assessment for the identification of risk of failure and bimonthly progress monitoring
- Proportionally appropriate services based upon risk assessment
- Positive Behavior and Intervention Support (PBIS)
- Extended-day programs
- Grade-level coaches
- Instructional specialists
- Teacher/peer coaches

At the heart of this team effort was the analysis of the assessments to inform instruction. Too often, it is forgotten that assessment is *about* the student—and for the student. The IST helped launch a Literacy Lab that was uniquely positioned to translate this belief into action for both individual remedial needs as well as for the teacher and the class as a whole. Literature specifically leveled for phonics, comprehension, and vocabulary formed the basis of guided reading lessons that interconnected to classroom themes and focus skills.

Through the Literacy Lab, instruction can now be targeted for the ever-changing needs of the students. This allows for the application of more personalized intervention, so that social/behavioral problems are minimized—and the academic opportunities are maximized.

This concept is dynamic, flexible, and drives the school's newfound collaborative decision-making process. Working together, the Instructional Support Team is able to support the school by identifying assessment tools, maintaining the database, and monitoring instructional decisions and subsequent teacher support need for focused instruction.

By providing an opportunity for this type of targeted teacher support and shared leadership, this school was able to jump two levels and move from “Underperforming” to “Performing Plus,” while at the same time reaching “Adequate Yearly Progress”—a feat many thought impossible.

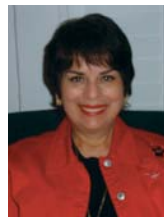
About the authors



Dr. Pam Robbins holds an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and a Master of Arts in Education/Curriculum and Instruction, both earned at University of Phoenix, and a BS in Elementary Education. She has over 20 years of experience in both public and private education. Her latest research on reading intervention can be accessed through ProQuest.

Read more about Dr. Robbins in *Phoenix Focus*, the online publication for University of Phoenix alumni. The article can be found at: <http://www.phxfocus.com/2010-01/index.htm>.

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Dr. Ana Ramos-Pell was born in Humacao, Puerto Rico, and moved to the United States at the age of six. She is a product of public schools and earned a BA in Education from the University of Central Florida, an MS in Education from the State University of New York, and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Language Acquisition from the University of Rochester. All of her studies were paid for with full Merit® Scholarships. She has over eight years of teaching experience at the elementary, middle and high school levels along with teaching experience at numerous universities. Dr. Ramos-Pell has been a school administrator for almost 10 years at various districts in the Phoenix area as well as in New York. She has published in local newspapers and has been principal of an elementary school since 2002.