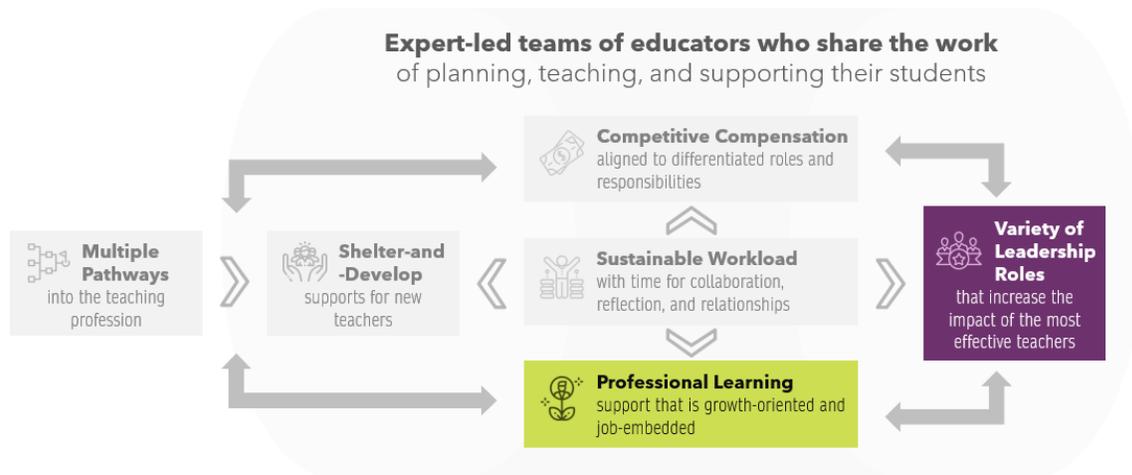




# Examples from the Field

## DC Public Schools



### ***Situation:* What was the problem the district was trying to solve?**

In 2010 DC Public Schools adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which raised the bar for teaching and learning. Teachers needed additional supports to help students reach this new bar, leading DCPS to explore new ways of supporting teacher development. This required embedding professional learning into the daily teaching job and closely connecting elements of professional learning that are often siloed in districts: rigorous, comprehensive curricula and assessments; content-focused, expert-led collaboration; and frequent, growth-oriented feedback.

### ***Approach:* How has the district worked on solving this challenge?**

In the 2016-2017 school year DCPS launched a district-wide professional learning strategy called Learning Together to Advance our Practice (LEAP). LEAP is built around the concept that the best professional learning happens when teams work together. Teachers in K-12 core content areas are organized into shared-content teams composed of teachers in adjacent grade levels, such as K-2 or ELA Grade 6-8. These teams are led by LEAP Leaders, who are chosen through an extensive screening process. LEAP Leaders are typically an instructional coach, teacher leader, or assistant principal.

Content teams collaborate for 90 minutes each week in a LEAP Seminar, a collection of which make up a LEAP Module. During this time teachers work with LEAP Leaders on some combination



of exploring a core instructional practice through shared learning; planning, practicing, and revising lesson plans; and examining and responding to student work. LEAP Leaders also provide frequent cycles of observation and individual coaching and growth-oriented feedback, in debriefs called a 5P Debrief. The recommended coaching frequency varies by grade-band, with a target of a weekly coaching touchpoint for elementary and middle schools and biweekly for high schools. It is also differentiated by teacher effectiveness, with opportunities for less frequent biweekly or monthly coaching touchpoints for effective teachers.

Teacher Leaders serving as LEAP Leaders teach for at least half of the day and have release time so they can spend the rest of their day coaching and leading other teachers. They receive a \$2,500 stipend and receive extensive professional development and coaching.

### A Day in the Life of Mr. Williams, LEAP Leader

Mr. Williams is a Teacher Leader and 6th grade ELA teacher at a DCPS middle school. He is a LEAP Leader for the 6-8 ELA team, which consists of 3 teachers. Their LEAP team meetings are held on Tuesdays. Below is a sample of Mr. Williams' Wednesday schedule. *Source: [DCPS and ERS](#)*

TIME	RESPONSIBILITIES
8:00-8:30	5P Debrief with Teacher 1
8:30-12:00	Teach 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade ELA
12:00-12:45	Lunch
12:45-1:00	LEAP Observation, Teacher 2
1:00-1:15	LEAP Observation, Teacher 3
1:15-2:15	Prep for LEAP Seminar next week
2:15-2:45	5P Debrief with Teacher 2

### **Resource shifts: What shifts did the district make to people, time, and money?**

- **Collaboration time:** Schools, with support from system leaders, decided how to integrate weekly 90-minute LEAP seminars as part of the 225 minutes of weekly teacher planning time and/or daily 30-minute collaborative blocks that were already in the teacher contract. In many cases, school leaders chose to repurpose a portion of individual planning time as collaborative planning time by aligning the planning periods of all team members. *For ideas on how to make this work in your system, visit [ERS's brief about finding time for meaningful collaborative planning](#).*
- **Teacher leader release time:** Teacher Leaders can receive up to 50% release time to coach and lead other teachers as LEAP Leaders.
- **Teacher leader compensation:** Teacher Leaders serving as LEAP Leaders receive stipends of \$2,500. This is in addition to a broader five-stage career ladder called Leadership Initiative for Teachers (LIFT), which provides high-performing teachers with opportunities for increased responsibility, recognition, and compensation. *Learn more about [ERS's work with DCPS on LIFT](#).*



- **Coaching and supports for LEAP Leaders:** DCPS provides coaching and training for LEAP Leaders. This training is designed and facilitated in-house, building off some of the coaching protocols that were developed collaboratively with Leading Educators through a previous contract.
- **Curriculum for LEAP Leaders:** DCPS provides LEAP Leaders with a professional development curriculum called LEAP Modules to help them facilitate collaboration time, which is aligned with CCSS and rooted in principles of adult learning.

## **Results: What have been the impacts to date?**

LEAP has expanded the amount of professional learning and coaching that teachers in DC Public Schools receive, and has made that support content-specific. Pre-pandemic, it was estimated that as a result of LEAP, DCPS teachers receive five to ten times more coaching time each year than a typical teacher previously received. Early results from a study on the implementation and impact of LEAP by the University of Virginia and Stanford found significant positive impacts on student achievement in schools that implemented LEAP with high fidelity. From 2016 to 2017, the percentage of students in those schools scoring proficient in reading increased four times more than in schools where LEAP was implemented with low fidelity.

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