Title: An Examination of Perceptions of Teacher Leadership of Teachers and Building Administrators Using a Comparative Case Study Approach

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The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of teacher leadership through the eyes of both teachers and building administrators. As the pressure among public school educators to improve student achievement continues to grow, it is increasingly clear that no one individual can get the job done alone. While schools seek to take on a distributed approach to leadership, incorporating teachers into their leadership practice, there are differing approaches and levels of success with regard to accomplishing this task. By recognizing how teachers and principals perceive teacher leadership, school districts may better establish a culture of collaboration that may capitalize on teacher strengths and expertise.

This study utilizes a comparative case study approach, examining two school districts that have committed to promoting teacher leadership and distributed leadership practice. Individual interviews were used to obtain the perceptions of both teachers and principals within these districts, based on their experiences within the school setting and centering on the role of teacher leaders, how teacher leaders may be supported, the obstacles to teacher leadership, and how teacher leaders are identified.

The findings and conclusions of this study show that teachers and principals both value teacher leadership, with similar recognition to the obstacles that prevent teacher

leadership from occurring. While both groups place their emphasis on student achievement, teacher responses indicate a greater emphasis on collaboration and cooperation with colleagues than building administrators, who focus more on accomplishing objectives. These differences are minimal, however, as the importance of both collaboration and task accomplishment is noted by both teachers and principals. Recommendations are based on how communication and development of school culture can develop a distributed approach to school leadership.