

Core Proposition #5:

Teachers are members of learning communities.

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Summary: Accomplished teachers reach beyond the boundaries of their individual classrooms to engage wider communities of learning. They connect with local, state, national, and global groups in person or via technology to take advantage of a broad range of professional knowledge and expertise. Accomplished educators draw on those resources when instructing their students and participating in duties that contribute significantly to the quality of schools and student learning. Those duties address two areas of responsibility: collaboration with other professionals to improve the effectiveness of schools and partnership with families and other stakeholders to promote the education of children and young adults. (*What teachers should know and be able to do.* p. 35)

Guidelines for Working Within a Productive Learning Community

- Acknowledge adults' ability to make decisions and manage their own learning.
- Relate new knowledge to previous learning and teaching experience.
- Make learning relevant to the teaching profession.
- Provide opportunities to apply new knowledge immediately in the classroom.

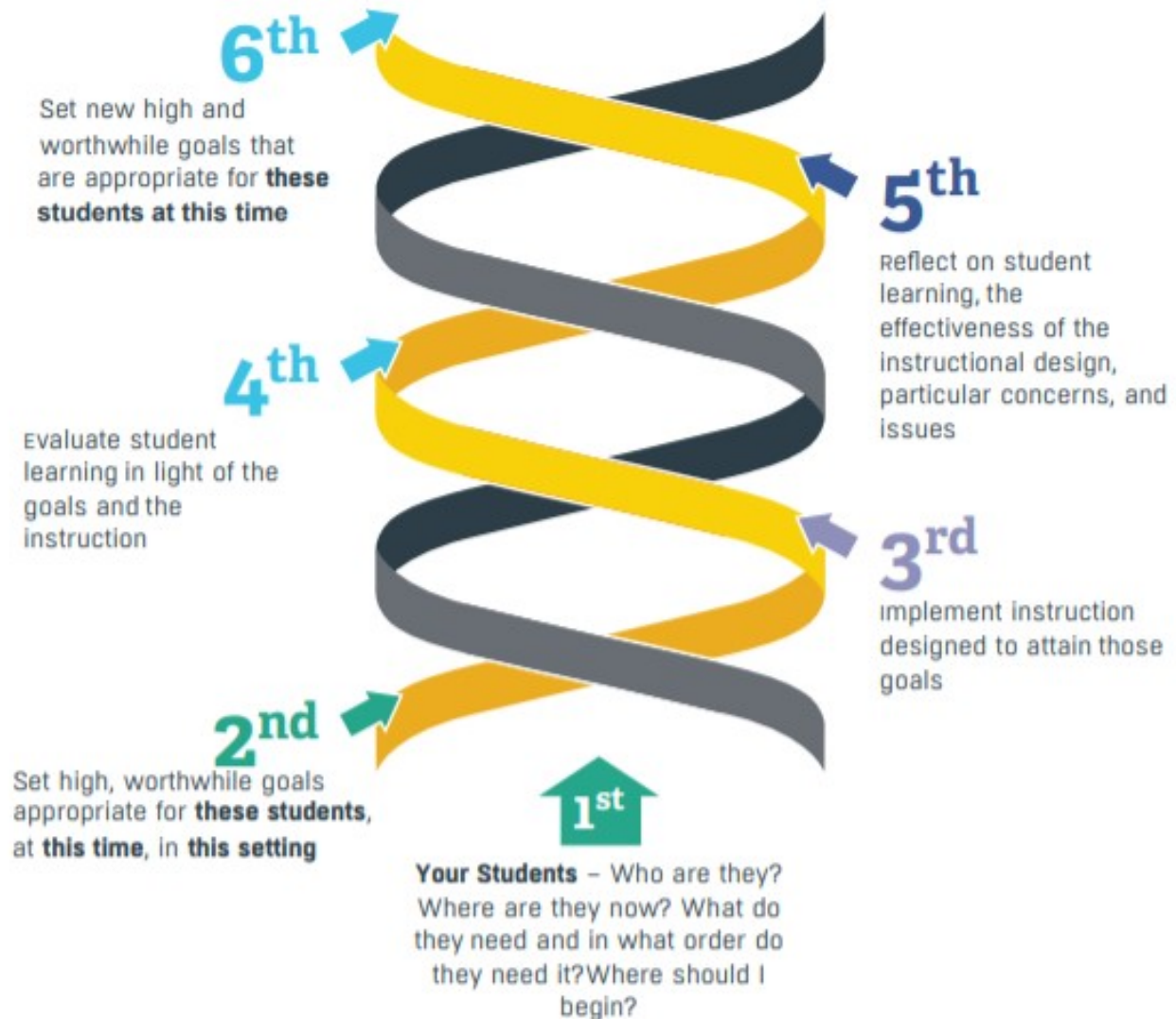
(Knowles)

Where can teachers find opportunities to be involved as a Teacher-Leader?

- Join the state National Education Association
- Join a content area organization (NCCTM for math or NCAEE for K-5, for example)
- Ask to serve on a School Improvement Team
- Volunteer to share instructional resources
- Informally facilitate data analysis with peers
- Ask critical questions during PLTs
- Mentor new teachers or teachers new to your subject/grade level
- Present at local, state, or national conferences
- Become a specialist in content or technology
- Invite teachers to visit your classroom
- Be a visionary and an advocate for change

Architecture of Accomplished Teaching

The Architecture of Accomplished Teaching: What is underneath the surface?



The Five Core Propositions

- PROPOSITION 1** → Teachers are committed to students and their learning
- PROPOSITION 2** → Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
- PROPOSITION 3** → Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
- PROPOSITION 4** → Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience
- PROPOSITION 5** → Teachers are members of learning communities

Core Proposition #5 and the AAT

Core Proposition 5 is not explicitly included in the AAT, but is woven throughout. Teachers collaborate for the purpose of improving school effectiveness in the areas of academics, student well-being, and community. There are various levels of community engagement by an accomplished teacher: Collaboration with other professionals, Collaboration with Families, and Collaboration with the Community. By working with various groups, teachers will have opportunities to increase their knowledge of students, content knowledge, and pedagogy.

Collaboration with other professionals: Accomplished teachers share responsibility with administrators and colleagues to develop curriculum, participate in meaningful professional development, and coordinate support for students with other teachers and professionals. Accomplished teachers work to develop a culture of excellence in their school. They strive to improve their teaching practice by observation, discussion, and reflection. Active participation may involve mentoring, serving on school/district teams, or experimenting with new methodologies.

Collaboration with Families: Accomplished teachers share the education of students with parents and guardians. They share both accomplishments and challenges, listen respectfully to concerns and views, and build partnerships for the education of young people. Accomplished teachers understand that family structure is changing in our society and they learn about their students' lives outside of school. They are alert to the fact that intellectual growth cannot be separated from physical, emotional and social growth.

Collaboration with the Community: Accomplished teachers do not need to teach alone. Any community can become a setting for learning, for example, a town planning meeting, visits to parks and museums, or small businesses supplement student learning. Teachers encourage students to appreciate the ethnic, socioeconomic and political influences on their communities. This work is sensitive for many educators, but accomplished teachers prepare students to respond productively to the diversity of their peers.

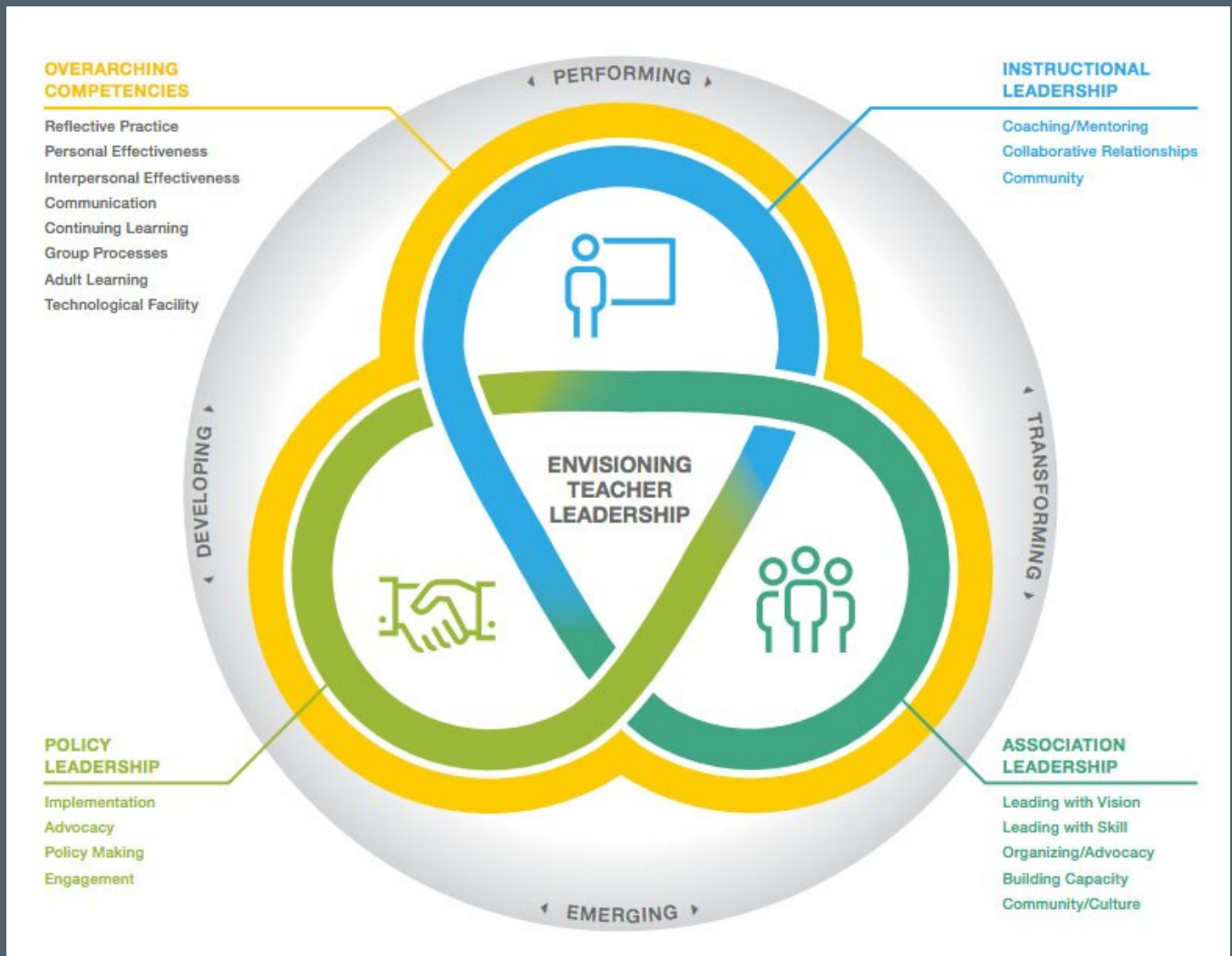
Student Advocacy

- Be active in the PTA
- Serve on the School Improvement Team
- Teach students to self-advocate
- Serve on the School Assistance Team
- Utilize available community resources (i.e. government, civic groups, faith groups, businesses)
- Inform policy-makers of school needs
- Join a professional association or organization

Partner with Families

- Contact parents early and often
- Share good news as well as areas for growth
- Take a team approach to problem-solving by including the student, parents/guardians, counselors, and administrators
- Appreciate the culture of the family
- Invite the family to be a part of the school community

What does it look like when a teacher is involved in Professional Learning Communities?



The Center for Teaching Quality, a national nonprofit based in NC, believes in the idea of “teacherpreneurs”. Teachers should lead the way and be given a schedule that allows time to mentor, collaborate, and discuss policy, as well as teaching. With experience, your interests will shift or new opportunities may present themselves. As you take on new roles, you should continue to increase your skills, knowledge and connections to increase your effectiveness.

Notice this process is not linear. Teachers are not expected to focus on all areas at one time. Teacher leaders do not move in a linear path, and leadership development is not dependent on completion of one level at a time. As you study this set of competencies, you will see natural connections to the NC Teacher Evaluation Tool as well as the NBPTS Five Core Propositions. These competencies reflect what is already happening in classrooms and schools and encourage the iterative process that teacher leaders use to achieve their potential.

Learning Walk Protocol Norms

“Focus on the Learning not on the Teaching”

Before the Visit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the host and walker(s)• Agree upon a time, length, and focus for the learning walk• Consult with your host to determine location in the classroom and level of interaction with students• Decide whether walker(s) will be taking paper/pencil notes or digital notes• Determine agreed upon time and location for walker(s) to debrief• Determine agreed upon time and location for debrief with host
During the Visit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note student behavior/learning as it relates to the learning focus• Highlight ideas and strategies that benefit the walker/host (The visit should not be evaluative)
After the Visit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Debrief in a private area and not in the hallway• Submit a digital copy of feedback the day of the visit• Use one digital form per learning walk (individual or team)• Honor the agreed upon time to debrief with host

Learning Walk Protocols designed by Rockingham County Schools, NC

An Example of Instructional Leadership

A learning walk is described as a non-evaluative observation of a colleague, focusing on student learning and not teaching. This represents an example of how a teacher could develop instructional leadership in school with an informal leadership role. The program may be implemented during teacher planning time and teachers could provide class coverage for colleagues during learning walks.

The overarching competencies from the Teacher Leadership Competencies diagram that the learning walk addresses are interpersonal effectiveness and reflective practice. Teacher leaders develop interpersonal effectiveness by becoming familiar with the skills needed to support colleagues, seeking opportunities to build trust with colleagues and fostering others' development. Reflective practice is demonstrated by modeling effective instructional practice and aiding others in understanding and using reflective analysis. If an educator implements this program in their school, they are also addressing continuing learning and education with their colleagues. By designing learning opportunities for educators around common professional goals, educators move toward the “performing” and “transforming” levels of the Teacher Leadership Competencies.

The learning walk protocol demonstrates leadership in the NC Professional Teaching Standards in Standard I (teachers demonstrate leadership) and Standard V (teachers reflect on their own practice). Educators reap the benefit of best practices shared by their colleagues and by debriefing, all stakeholders use the opportunity for reflective practice to improve student learning.

Professional Career Continuum for Teaching



How does a teacher progress along the Career Continuum?

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) considers Board certification as the bridge from Professional Teacher to Teacher/School Leader. When an educator attempts certification, they provide evidence of accomplished teaching, as described in the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching and the standards for each certificate area. Providing a teacher career continuum is a way to achieve improvements in student learning and outcomes in education. Board certification does not represent the pinnacle of a career, but serves as a platform to become leaders in their schools, districts, and the profession. Teacher leaders should model what the Five Core Propositions look like in practice. At the district and state levels, teacher leaders can support other educators at various points in the career continuum.

As NBPTS states, the goal is that “every student will learn from accomplished teachers every day.”

When you think about Core Proposition 5 and the members of your Professional Learning Community, who are the peers who have helped inspire you to be at the point you are today? Consider all the “leader-like” activities that you have initiated or benefitted from, in both formal and informal roles. Teacher leadership does not have to be formalized or linear, but it should be active and continually evolving.

Educators can use peers and current activities to become a valuable member of a learning community and move forward on the career continuum. How? Seek and build partnerships with others in such areas as instructional policy, curriculum design and professional development. Evaluate school progress toward local and state education goals and seek collaboration with instructional specialists to maximize student learning.

“Next Steps” to Leadership:

- Identify teacher leaders you want to interact with
- List all the leadership activities you are currently involved in
- Complete a self-assessment to identify your strengths and areas of growth
- Develop a plan: where do you want to be in five years? Ten years?

Notes

Teacher Leadership Competencies	NC Professional Teaching Standards	NBPTS Five Core Propositions
Emerging	Developing	Level 1
Developing	Proficient	Level 2
Performing	Accomplished	Level 3
Transforming	Distinguished	Level 4

The NC Professional Teaching Standards are already aligned to the Five Core Propositions and the Teacher Leadership Competencies, as shown in the chart above. Standard I specifically addresses teacher leadership, but the language of teacher leadership can be found in all standards. Phrases like: “promotes trust,” “encourages and guides colleagues,” and “collaborates with colleagues” are seen in the “distinguished” level for each standard.

Sources:

Knowles, Malcolm S. *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: from Pedagogy to Andragogy*. Cambridge Adult Education, 1988.

“Teacher Leadership Initiative Competencies.” *NEA*, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, www.nea.org/home/61346.htm.

For a full explanation of how accomplished teachers are members of learning communities read chapter five of *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do* published by National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (<http://accomplishedteacher.org>).

What
Teachers
Should Know
and Be Able to Do

TEACHERS ARE COMMITTED TO STUDENTS AND THEIR LEARNING | TEACHERS KNOW THE SUBJECTS THEY TEACH AND HOW TO TEACH THOSE SUBJECTS TO STUDENTS | TEACHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING AND IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING | TEACHERS SHARE COLLECTIVELY ABOUT THEIR PRACTICE AND LEARN FROM COLLEAGUES | TEACHERS ARE MEMBERS OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES

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