



# Policy Engagement and Relationships

## Competency

Educator deepens understanding of how their strengths in teacher leadership impact the policy engagement and relationships process.

## Key Method

The educator uses the Learn-Design-Do-Reflect cycle to conduct a needs assessment and engage stakeholders around a policy issue. The educator deepens their understanding of the policy engagement and relationships process and how their own biases, experiences of privilege, and personal values impact this competency.

## Method Components

Smart education policy should be shaped and guided by what accomplished teachers know about teaching and learning. Too often, individuals with little to no classroom experience are in charge of making policy decisions. Teacher leaders are willing to step up and step out of their classrooms to serve in school, district, state, or national policy leadership capacities to help shape and, eventually, implement the policies that support student learning.

### Policy Competencies for Teacher Leaders

- Policy Implementation



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- Policy Advocacy
- Policy Making
- Policy Engagement and Relationships

### Learn-Design-Do-Reflect Cycle

The Learn-Design-Do-Reflect cycle is a tool used in the NEA Teacher Leadership Institute to support the development of teacher leadership. The following descriptors will help you understand your participation in each step of the process.

- Learn: Delve into resources, explore the needs of your school, district, or state, and self-assess in order to gain a deep understanding of research, best practice, the needs of your educational setting, and your own professional learning needs
- Design: Design an action plan that addresses at least one of the needs of your school, district, or state.
- Do: Implement your plan and collect information and evidence about the challenges and successes of your implementation.
- Reflect: Take time to reflect on the outcomes and the process of implementation of your action plan and consider next steps.

### Policy Engagement, Relationships, and Teacher Leadership

According to the NEA Teacher Leadership Competencies (2018), developing your teacher leadership in the area of Policy Engagement and Relationships includes the following: (See Resources section for link to the complete guide.)

#### Emerging Level

- Prepare themselves for conversations about current issues regarding education.
- Know the names, roles, alignments, and functions of various policy makers.

#### Developing Level



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- Develop powerful messages about school culture, climate, and environment.
- Connect with policymakers, using methods that effectively engage them and enhance their willingness to listen and learn.

#### Performing Level

- Take formal leadership roles that directly influence or involve policy making.
- Build strong relationships with policy makers that encompass the ability to both listen to and influence them.

#### Transforming Level

- Identify and support other teacher leaders to take a role in policy making.
- Foster the development of coalitions and gain the support of organizations in pursuit of a positive policy agenda.
- Influence other teacher leaders to own the positive policy agenda.

#### Types of Policy Engagement and Relationship Leadership Plans

- Use powerful messages about school culture, diversity, and environment shared on professional social media.
- Maintain strong connections with policymakers through personal contacts.
- Engage policy makers in ongoing dialogue recorded in a communication log with the purpose of advocating for equity and enhancing perspectives of all.
- Pursue and accept a formal leadership role with influence or direct involvement with policy making.
- Improve or strengthen relationships with policy makers to enhance learning and leverage influence by attending board meetings, facilitating a community meeting, and/or organizing a meet-and-greet.



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- Empower other teacher leaders to take action in campaigning for policy advocacy.
- Develop diverse coalitions and alliances to challenge inequitable policies and pursue equitable policies y agendas.
- Practice collaborative leadership by empowering other diverse organizations and teachers with full ownership of the policy agenda.
- Record and share the results of policy advocacy through narratives, testimonies, or other recorded methods.

## Supporting Rationale and Research

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1980). *Work redesign*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

This seminal book examines the characteristics of designing work around organizational goals and missions. This research comes from the organizational sciences and has direct application in how work is organized for those working to engage others in policy work.

Hattie, J. (2015). *What works best in education: The politics of collaborative expertise* (Open Ideas). Pearson. Retrieved from

[https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/corporate/global/pearson-dot-com/files/hattie/150526\\_ExpertiseWEB\\_V1.pdf](https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/corporate/global/pearson-dot-com/files/hattie/150526_ExpertiseWEB_V1.pdf)

Hattie makes a strong case for collaborative expertise based on his meta-analyses of effective teaching practices, and builds on his visible learning work.

Kraft, M. A., & Papay, J. P. (2016). *Developing workplaces where teachers stay, improve, and succeed*. The Albert Shanker Institute. Retrieved from

<http://www.shankerinstitute.org/blog/developing-workplaces-where-teachers-stay-improve-and-succeed>

“Teachers working in schools with strong professional environments improved, over 10 years, 38% more than teachers in schools with weak professional environments.”



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Leithwood, K., Seashore-Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2010). *Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation.

In this study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, researchers from the University of Toronto and University of Minnesota concluded that collective leadership has a stronger influence on student achievement than individual leadership, and that higher-performing schools award greater influence to teacher teams, parents, and students. Further, the study found that principals and district leaders do not lose influence as others gain influence.

## Resources

### Templates

[Teacher Leadership Context Circle Map \(Google Doc\) for Artifact 1](#)

[2018–Current Teacher Leadership Institute Fellows Action Plan Template for Artifact 3](#)

[Action/Design Plan Template for non-Teacher Leadership Institute Fellows for Artifact 3](#)

### NEA Resources

[Teacher Leadership competencies as defined by the Teacher Leadership Institute](#)

[Teacher Leadership Competencies](#) (Full booklet download)

*Scroll to find the PDF download*

### Resources

[Activities vs. Outcomes: The Difference Makes All the Difference](#)  
[Learning Forward, October 2015, Vol. 36 No. 5](#)

[Department of Education Comprehensive Needs Assessment Document](#)

[Design Thinking for Educators](#)



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[Embarking on Action Research Educational Leadership, April 2009](#)

[Engaging Stakeholders](#)

[Power Mapping](#)

[7 Steps to Create a Policy Study](#)

[She Should Run](#)

[Teacher Leadership Competencies](#) (Full booklet download)

Scroll to find the PDF download

## Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

*To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and receive a proficient for all components in Part 2.*

### Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

(350-500 words)

Please answer the following contextual questions to help our assessor understand your current situation. Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

- What is your professional mission and vision for teacher leadership?
- Describe your professional learning goals for completing this micro-credential.
- Describe the professional context for earning this micro-credential.
  - Number of years in education, subject area, etc.
  - School/community, e.g., rural, urban, suburban, school level, student/community demographics, socioeconomic data, etc.
  - Share any additional information that may help someone understand your context.
  - Describe your current roles and general experience teacher leadership at the school, district, and/or state level.
  - Who are the stakeholders in your community?

Passing: Professional mission and vision clearly states what the educator hopes to achieve in their career and what success will look like when achieved. Professional



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context is reasonable and accurate and includes specific professional learning goals as an outcome of completing this micro-credential.

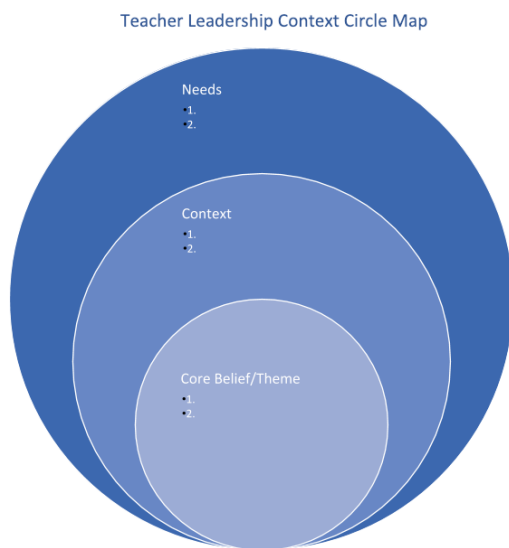
## Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following four artifacts as evidence of your learning. Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.

### **Artifact 1: Teacher Leadership Circle Map**

(See template in Resources section)

Fill in the circle map using the template in the Resources section or draw your own on chart paper.



#### Directions for Circle Map

- Center Circle: Core Theme/Belief

Use page 5 of the NEA Teacher Leadership Competencies Booklet (see Resources section) to identify the core belief/theme that resonates with you.

- Middle Circle: Context

Synthesize the information you gathered in Part 1. You may include any other relevant contextual information to guide your thinking and recording for the middle circle:

- District (Suburban/Rural/ Urban)



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- Colleagues
- Site/District Administration
- Teacher Leadership Culture
- Demographics (school, community)
- Who are the stakeholders in your school/district?

- Outer Circle: Needs

After identifying your teacher leadership context, identify and record the needs of your school and/or district, in relationship to policy engagement and relationships in the outer circle. Consider the following guiding questions as you identify your contextual needs:

- Is there a stakeholder group that is not represented in decision-making?
- How are diverse perspectives included?
- What inequities currently exist in your school/district?
- What resources are needed to address these inequities?
- What are the needs of the community?
- How does the school address the needs of the community?
- What are the needs of my school/district?
- What are the needs of my colleagues/my association?
- How do the needs of my colleagues affect the classroom, school, and district?
- What are the needs of my local association?
- How do the needs of my association affect me and my colleagues?

### **Artifact 2: Review**

Connect your teacher leadership circle map to the policy engagement and relationships by answering the following questions (50-150 words or three to five bullet points each):

1. What might your role be as a teacher leader to positively impact the identified policy engagement and relationships needs of your diverse stakeholders (students, school, district, association), based on your context and grounded in your core belief/theme
2. What might your role be as a teacher leader to inspire and support other potential teacher leaders in effective policy engagement and relationships



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with cross-cultural or diverse groups, based on your context and grounded in your core belief/theme?

### **Artifact 3: Design**

Use the Teacher Leadership Policy Engagement and Relationships competency to design an activity or action that you can perform to address an identified need from your Leadership Circle Map. Describe how your plan supports and promotes equity.

Complete and upload one of the following design templates

- Option 1: 2018-Current Teacher Leadership Institute Fellows Action Plan Template (see template in Resources section or use the one you created in your state cohort)
- Option 2: Action/Design Plan Template for non-Teacher Leadership Institute Fellows (see template in Resources section)

### **Artifact 4: Do (part 1)**

Upload three different artifacts that show evidence of implementation of your action plan annotated with descriptions (20-50 words each).

These artifacts may include:

- Websites
- Newsletter
- Emails
- Recorded webinars
- Presentations
- Emails to and from participants
- Online forums (screenshots of conversations)
- Completed websites
- Products developed during the process
- Artifacts from tools like Remind or Huddle
- Voice recorded messages for phone lists
- Group chats/text messages

### **Description should include:**

- Time/date
- Number of participants
- Purpose of artifact and how it was used.
- Explain how equity is supported and promoted.

### **Artifact 5: Feedback from Participants – Do (Part 2)**

Obtain feedback from at least two stakeholders in attendance.



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Use these prompts to obtain necessary feedback to serve as evidence. Your chosen participants should respond to each prompt in two to three sentences or bulleted points.

- How did the teacher leader engage you in policy engagement and relationships?
- What were the intended outcomes, and to what degree were the outcomes achieved?
- What did you gain from participating in this experience?
- If the teacher leader were to implement this plan again, what could be done differently? Why?
- How did the teacher leader address diversity, equity, and cultural competence during this activity?

## Part 2. Rubric

	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>Artifact 1: Circle Map</b>	<p>Circle map is complete, and directions were followed closely</p> <p>Core belief/theme is from the Teacher Leadership Book</p> <p>The context section is complete with enough context to be useful in understanding the full picture</p> <p>Needs are listed and realistic and within your sphere of influence</p> <p>Needs reflect diverse perspectives</p>	<p>Circle map is missing important information</p> <p>Core belief/theme is not from the Teacher Leadership Book</p> <p>The context is missing some important information</p> <p>The needs may be too broad and out of your realm of influence</p> <p>Needs reflect at least one diverse perspective</p> <p>Needs are based on opinion and not fact</p>	<p>Circle map is incomplete</p> <p>Core belief/theme not identified</p> <p>Very little context given</p> <p>Needs are not identified or not based on facts</p> <p>Needs do not include diverse perspectives</p> <p>Needs are stated in a negative tone that is not proactive</p>



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	Needs are identified using a positive proactive, professional voice and are facts, not opinions	Professional or proactive voice is not used	
<b>Artifact 2: Action Plan</b>	<p>Template is completely filled out</p> <p>Professional goals are measurable, actionable, and relevant to policy engagement and relationships</p> <p>Needs and current reality are based on actual evidence, NOT opinion</p> <p>Needs reflect diverse perspectives</p> <p>Results are realistic and focus on affecting the practice of others</p> <p>Description is clear, and activity directly relates to professional goals, needs, desired results, and policy engagement and relationships</p>	<p>Template is incomplete or not thoughtfully done</p> <p>Professional goals may not be measurable, actionable, and/or relevant to policy engagement and relationships</p> <p>Needs may be based partially on opinion and/or evidence is not substantial</p> <p>Needs reflect at least one diverse perspective</p> <p>Results may not be realistic and/or do not focus on affecting the practice of others</p> <p>Description not clear and/or the activity does not directly relate to professional goals, needs, desired results, and policy engagement and relationships</p>	<p>Template is not complete, or it is incorrectly filled out</p> <p>Professional goals are missing</p> <p>Needs are missing or based on opinion and/or personal biases</p> <p>Needs do not include diverse perspectives</p> <p>Unrealistic results</p> <p>Description missing or not understandable</p>



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<b>Artifact 3: Design</b>	Activity design template is completely filled out  Activity design aligns to your identified needs  Activity design is actionable  Activity supports and promotes equity	Activity design template is not completely filled out  Activity design loosely aligns to your identified needs  Activity design is not actionable  Activity supports equity	Activity design template is not used  Activity design does not align to your identified needs  Activity design is not actionable  Activity does not address equity
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### Part 3. Reflection

(400-500 words)

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

*Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

- How will your knowledge of policy engagement and relationships impact your leadership work with others?
- How will you continue to lead learning activities to enhance the practice of others at various levels of leadership?
- How did addressing diversity, equity, and cultural competence affect your ability to facilitate policy engagement and relationships? What are your next steps to continue your growth as a teacher leader?

**Passing:** Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on the teacher leaders as well as on others in the professional context of earning this micro-credential. Specific examples are cited directly from personal or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.



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