

# Teacher Leader

Stay Warm



## Save the Date!

Michigan SOGI Education Conference  
Oakland Center-Oakland University

Saturday, March 9, 2013 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

To register: <http://www.oakland.edu/SOGI/register>

### As Vision Becomes Reality: The Promise of Teacher Leadership Unfolds

by Suzanne Klein

Living into the shared vision for the Avondale/Oakland University Magnet Lab School Partnership has catapulted the early collaborative work of the planning team from questions like “How might we....” to conversations about “What’s the update from...” and on to celebrations around accomplishments to date as they unfold. At each step along the way, there continues to be a clear focus on the goals for Avondale students and their families, for the Avondale staff and for Oakland University that guides this work.

Looking into the lessons learned from this unique partnership, we see that the strong commitment to teacher leadership remains unchanged and has even expanded. University classes are now offered in the school district and Avondale staff teach university courses on campus. Avondale teachers play a major role in the dialogue of translating theory into practice and practice into theory through initiatives like the district-wide Teacher Lab, an embedded professional development program which now encompasses elementary, middle and high school staff. The role of a teacher leader for the partnership school has been developed and the governance design for the school anticipates an active leadership role for each staff member. Structured leadership training for staff will be complemented by the foundation of the Covey Leader in Me model for student leadership growth as well as the outreach to engage parents and community members.

Avondale team members discuss the collaborative leadership model



If you were to watch this work unfold through the magic of time-lapse photography which captured not only the outcomes of the partnership but also the dynamics of the work in progress, you would see many powerful examples of distributed leadership in action: a shared focus on enhancing the quality of the teaching and student learning; teachers leading from where they stand while growing themselves and guiding the growth of their colleagues and future teachers; additional university and community resources connecting with staff, students and families across the entire school district as new partners join the project. The commitment to this shared vision remains vibrant because of the trust, confidence and commitment of the teacher leaders and representatives from both organizations who have united on behalf of all Avondale students.

### Keeping Up with Podcasts— Check out the most recent podcasts on our website.

- Tim Larrabee, Associate Dean, talks about the very successful SOGI task force (Vol 6, Ep07)
- Gary Doyle, Former Superintendent of Bloomfield Hills Schools, shares his view on school reform (Vol 6, Ep08).
- John Merrow, President of Learning Matters, discusses the analysis of Michelle Rhee’s stint in D.C. (Vol 6, Ep09)
- Debra Chasnoff, Documentary film producer, discusses Groundspark’s Respect for All Program (Vol 6, Ep 10)
- Phil Power, founder of The Center for Michigan, provides a refreshing voice on school reform (Vol 6, Ep 11)



*My Style*  
**Of Teacher Leadership**

**Teacher Leadership Requires Courage**  
By Sara Delgado, Grosse Pointe Public Schools

The majority of teachers would not argue with the fact that it is important to instill a sense of leadership in their students. Moreover, encouraging students to take risks and challenge their thinking is another key component of most classrooms. Why then would the practice be any different for teacher leadership?



Although teachers strive to promote leadership among their students, often those same principles are difficult to embrace in their own practice. For this reason, it is increasingly important for teacher leaders to step forward, providing a positive example in order to remove the stigma from leadership, perhaps encouraging their colleagues to follow suit.

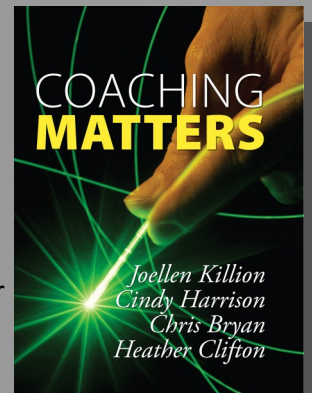
In order for teachers to feel comfortable stepping up to a leadership role, there is one essential element that must be present throughout a school building, trust. Just as students in a classroom are not willing to take risks if there is a fear of ridicule and mockery, teachers often pass on opportunities to take on leadership roles when high levels of trust are not present in the school building. In these instances, positive examples by strong teacher leaders can help to break down the wall of mistrust and encourage other colleagues to seek out opportunities to lead.

Promoting teacher leadership is even easier when it is supported by upper administrators. We have new elementary and secondary curriculum directors in our district this year. One major change that they have initiated is to put professional development opportunities into the hands of the teachers. This has been extremely empowering as well as eye-opening. During the fall sessions, there were several innovative and meaningful opportunities offered. They were well attended; and the feedback was phenomenal. Teachers enjoyed learning new instructional methods from practicing colleagues. They also felt a sense of camaraderie when collaborating about ideas that had worked and those that hadn't. As a result, even more teacher leaders have emerged to provide spring semester learning opportunities for their colleagues. Kudos to our new curriculum directors for empowering their teachers and putting the PD in the hands of the practitioners!

**BOOK TALK** *with Kay Cornell, Education Consultant*

COACHING MATTERS, by Joellen Killion, Cindy Harrison, Chris Bryan, Heather Clifton, Learning Forward, 2012

With the speed of change required in education today, research has pretty clearly reinforced the value of coaching to support teachers' growth. This brand new book from Learning Forward is the perfect guide for embedding coaching into your district, whether you're at a beginning or developing stage of coaching. Joellen and the other authors cover characteristics of effective coaching, types and roles of coaching, developing coaching relationships and many other practical topics. Their approach to coaching is summed up in the quote they use from Lou Holtz: "It is a fine thing to have ability, but the ability to discover ability in others is the true test." This book will help you add one more important piece to the continuing challenge of improving achievement for ALL students.



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