AFT’s Teacher Leaders Program

ENDEAVORS

RESEARCH STUDIED:

• The effect on school budgets when students are under-subscribed in the free and reduced-price lunch program;
• Ways to implement the Common Core State Standards with diverse learners;
• Homework policies and completion rates;
• A district’s inclusion practices;
• The effects of pre-K on student achievement;
• The effects of mentoring on teacher efficacy and attrition;
• Graduation requirements for career and technical education students; and
• Flipping the STEM classroom.

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES PERFORMED:

• Working with their students, colleagues, school officials and the community to successfully persuade a local school board to reconsider its design plans for a new building;
• Uniting students, teachers and parents to fight inappropriate and excessive testing;
• Collaborating with a community agency to draw attention to the undertaxed properties on the city’s tax roles; and
• Serving as chapter leaders, delegates and building stewards, and becoming more involved in the legislative work of teaching.

OUR MISSION

The American Federation of Teachers is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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The AFT Teacher Leaders Program (TLP) brings together a select group of teachers throughout the school year to learn how to take active leadership roles in their schools, unions and communities. Participants in the TLP help to strengthen the union and its connection to the community building greater support and understanding of public schools.

The AFT Teacher Leaders Program supports the goals of the local unions and provides:

- A strong tie to community organizations and community leaders;
- An informed teacher voice;
- A vehicle for positive messaging about public schools and their unions; and
- A pipeline for future school and union leaders.

Participating teachers develop skills related to:

- Creating a collaborative culture;
- Accessing, using and presenting relevant research;
- Reaching out to families and communities;
- Becoming advocates for teachers, students and their families, and for public education; and
- Understanding policy issues and making recommendations to and through their unions.

Through their participation in the AFT Teacher Leaders Program, teachers:

- Become conversant with and participate in both the local and national dialogue on education;
- Develop relationships with local policymakers and community leaders;
- Connect practice, research and policy; and
- Serve as a sounding board and advisory group for union leaders.

To support implementation of the TLP by local affiliates, the AFT provides orientation for the local president and facilitator; technical assistance/ongoing support; stipends for participating teachers and facilitators; and access to a nationwide online community of teacher leaders from all locals engaged in this work.

For more information about the AFT Teacher Leaders Program, contact Marjorie Brown at mbrown@aft.org.