



THE USER'S GUIDE: ***Where Teachers Thrive*** **(Harvard Education Press, 2019)**

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What This Book Is About

My goal in writing *Where Teachers Thrive* was to encourage improvements in the school workplace so that teachers find satisfaction in their chosen career and success with their students. I've written this User's Guide for all readers who want to reflect on this book and act on what they learn.

Research clearly shows that teachers are the most important school-based factor in students' learning, but it's far less clear how schools can best draw on those teachers' knowledge, skills, time, and commitment. *Where Teachers Thrive* examines how the school context affects teachers' work. Its rich case studies conducted in 14 low-income urban schools reveal how key features of these schools—such as how teachers are hired, whether and how they work with colleagues, how their time is used, and how they are paid—influence their satisfaction with teaching and their success with students. The book focuses on what works and why, not only in low-income, urban schools, but in all schools.

Who This Book Is For

I wrote *Where Teachers Thrive* with different readers and audiences in mind because real school improvement depends on many individuals in many roles working together over time. They include:

- Teachers, whose work is shaped by their school's context and who can join together to improve it.
- Principals, who provide crucial leadership as their school's chief agent of change and guide to improvement;
- District and Charter Management Organization (CMO) administrators, who create opportunities and support so that schools can become better environments for effective teaching and learning;
- Policymakers, whose laws and regulations shape the priorities and influence the practices of those districts and schools;
- Parents and other citizens who seek to promote efforts to improve their schools;
- Instructors and consultants who prepare graduate students and current professionals for new roles and responsibilities; and
- Scholars who can build on the research discussed here to advance understanding of the teachers' workplace and better inform policies and practices intended to improve it.

Reading and Discussing *Where Teachers Thrive*

The following sections of this User's Guide are meant to spark more ideas about how you might use *Where Teachers Thrive* as individuals, study groups, instructors, or policymakers in various settings. To illustrate various approaches, I'll draw on the content of selected chapters and suggest questions and activities for reflection and discussion. However, I encourage readers and instructors to adapt the following approaches to illuminate any key topic in the book:

- **Understanding** this book's key ideas, issues, cases and recommendations;
- **Reflecting on your school context and comparing it with others**—both those described in the case studies and those of other members of a discussion group;
- **Learning about other schools** by arranging a panel of teachers and administrators; gathering and analyzing documents such as schedules, handbooks, and policies that affect teachers' work; and visiting schools to investigate specific practices;
- **Proposing, planning and implementing changes** that have promise to improve one or more aspects of your school as a workplace for teachers;
- **Enacting state and local policies** that regulate the schools' practices or expand their capacity to improve;
- **Preparing current and future instructional leaders, managers, and policymakers** to understand how the school context affects teachers' work and how administrative practices and policies can support improvement;
- **Creating new knowledge through research** about the teachers' workplace and how to improve it.

Questions for guided reading—individuals and groups

As you read the book, reflect on some of the challenging issues that the chapters in *Where Teachers Thrive* raise and address. For example:

1. **Making a match in hiring.** Given students' diverse needs and teachers' varied areas of expertise, how should a school decide which qualifications, skills, and mindsets matter most in hiring new teachers? As I explain in Chapter 1, making a match between a candidate and the school is a high standard to meet in all hiring decisions. What limits might schools encounter in pursuing that goal? What compromises, if any, would you be willing to make?
2. **Deciding what and how to teach.** In the context of increasing accountability for students' learning, many teachers contend that standardized tests have become their de facto curriculum. Is this common? Is it a problem? Is it inevitable? What do the cases of Lane Park Elementary School and Deer Park Middle School in Chapter 2 suggest about different ways that principals can influence and manage approaches to curriculum development, instruction, and testing?
3. **Expanding teachers' effectiveness through collaboration.** In Chapter 3, we see schools taking steps to reduce teachers' isolation and expand their influence through collaboration. Some work well; others fail. Do you think that individual teachers should decide for

themselves whether and how to meet and work with others? In reorganizing teachers' work, which, if any, decisions about curriculum and instruction should be consistent throughout the school and which decisions should teams or individual teachers make?

4. **Supporting students and their families.** As Chapter 4 explains, some schools assume broad responsibility for the lives of their students and families, while others limit their obligations to interactions that occur within the school during school hours. Which approach makes most sense to you? How do different discipline systems affect teachers' responsibilities and students' experiences?
5. **Teachers' influence in school improvement.** There's wide agreement that the principal plays a decisive role in school improvement. Why, then, do some principals we read about in Chapter 5 engage teachers in deliberations and decisions about how best to improve their school, while others don't? Specifically, what's to be gained with shared leadership? What, if anything, might be lost? What are some examples from the book and/or your own experience that support your views?
6. **Improving instruction through supervision and evaluation.** Some principals described in Chapter 6 are much more effective than others in helping teachers improve their instruction. Based on the examples in the cases, what distinguishes principals whose observations and feedback teachers value? What does this suggest to you about how best to support teachers' instructional development?
7. **Using teachers' time wisely.** Teachers' time is arguably the scarcest resource that schools have. Given the value of that time and its benefit to students, how do schools in Chapter 7 differ in their use of teachers' time? What is the argument for committing less time to classroom instruction and more time to schoolwide collaboration? Do you find that argument persuasive?
8. **Paying teachers well.** Many argue that teachers should be paid what they're worth. In practice, though, what does this mean? Based on your own experience and the cases in Chapter 8, do you think that the most effective teachers should receive merit bonuses and raises or should all teachers receive pay that is comparable to what they could earn in other professions?
9. **Ensuring good schools for all.** District and CMO administrators are responsible for ensuring that all their schools are effective. In centralized systems, district or CMO administrators make decisions about practice for all schools, while in decentralized systems, schools have the authority to make many of those decisions on their own. In thinking about the school as a workplace for teachers, do you favor a centralized or decentralized approach to managing a school system? If you prefer a hybrid approach (some decisions made by the central administrators and some made by the schools), which types of decisions should be determined centrally and which should be left to the schools?

Reflecting on your school context

Each chapter in *Where Teachers Thrive* addresses a distinct practice and provides examples from various schools about how they approach it. As you read, reflect on, and discuss each chapter, compare your school's approach with those you find in the book. For example after reading Chapter 1, "Making a Match in Hiring:"

- 1. How were you hired as a teacher?** Were you recruited or did you apply on your own? Was the process school-based and information-rich or centralized and information-poor? As you look back, did that hiring process affect your entry into the school and your subsequent work as a teacher? If so, how?
- 2. What role do teachers play in hiring?** As a current teacher, have you participated in your school's hiring process? If so, what was your role? What was your principal's role? Did you personally recruit candidates, assess them, or influence a final hiring decision? If so, do you think it was worth your time? Should teachers be expected to assume such responsibilities or not?
- 3. What role do principals play in hiring?** If you're a principal, what influence can and do you exercise in hiring teachers? How does that compare with what the principals in the book's case studies could do? Are you satisfied with your school system's current arrangement? Do you think that teachers should be involved in hiring their future colleagues? What are the potential benefits or risks of doing so?
- 4. What role does the district play in hiring?** How does your district's approach to hiring teachers compare with that of the Walker City School District? Do you think that principals in your district want more or less assistance and support than they receive and, if so, in what aspects of the process?

Learning from other schools

When teachers think about the school as a workplace, they usually focus on their own school and how it works. If you've never taught anywhere else, you may assume that all schools function like yours, but they don't. That's what the case studies in the book are for—to illustrate problematic and successful practices, grounded in the detail of real schools and their educators. Readers can compare their own school with those cases, reflecting on what works well and what might work better. They can discover promising practices they've never considered. If you and your colleagues want to learn more about other options, you can ask educators in other schools about their experiences, either by inviting them to meet with you or visiting their schools.

Convene a panel of educators. Small study groups can learn from a panel of educators invited from other schools that have different policies and practices. By focusing on a single topic—such as instructional teams, roles for teacher leaders, discipline, or student supports—you can explore other schools' practices in detail and learn how things really work (or don't). Select a

well-informed, open-minded moderator who can draw out the similarities and differences between the cases in the book and the various practices that panelists describe.

For example, your team might want to learn about alternative ways to promote collaboration. Once you've discussed the formal or informal ways that you and your colleagues share information about instruction and students, invite educators from other schools—possibly including district, charter, and independent schools in their area—to describe whether and how their teachers collaborate. Drawing on the cases in Chapter 3, ask panelists questions like these that get to the details of their practice:

1. Does your school have clear norms and expectations about the benefits of collaboration among teachers? If so, how would a teacher who joins your faculty learn about them?
2. Are there structures in place to support collaboration in your school? For example, do teachers have common planning time? If so, whose schedules are aligned—those who teach students in the same grade level or cluster; those who teach the same subject; or both? Who covers teachers' classes during common planning time?
3. Do your teams have a clear, worthwhile purpose for meeting? What is it? Do teams make decisions that affect the practice of all their members? Do they recommend schoolwide changes? If so, how does that process work?
4. Do teachers use team time to plan curriculum units and lessons? If they do, describe a typical meeting: Who plans the agenda? How do teachers prepare for the meeting? Do teams have a facilitator? What are the challenges and benefits of joint planning?
5. What, if any, role do administrators play in guiding or monitoring the teams' work? Are they present at meetings or do they review the teams' work in other ways? Would you like your administrators to be more or less involved?

Visit other schools. As a next step in exploring alternative practices, your school-based study team can visit other schools. Again, focus on a specific practice, such as student behavior and discipline, and choose a school that you know has a well-established system that you could learn from. In advance, team members should read whatever documents are available, such as the school's discipline code or the teachers' handbook and then decide together what to pay attention to during your visit. For example, you might sit in on classes to watch how students and teachers interact and then observe informally in hallways, the library, the cafeteria, and on the playground. Following observations, you could meet with an administrator and teacher to ask further questions about what you observed. During your visit you might explore questions such as these:

1. How do students and their families come to know what the school's rules and norms are? Is that information available in various forms and settings?

2. Is there evidence that the official discipline system is actually enacted? Do administrators, teachers, and parents seem to demonstrate that the rules and expectations deserve their support?
3. How are rules and norms enforced? Do teachers, administrators, and students all play a role? If so, how does that work? Does the school rely on a set of disciplinary practices, such as merits/demerits, detention, or awards, to reinforce their rules and norms? If so, does that seem to be effective?
4. Is there evidence that teachers and administrators maintain consistent expectations for all students in classrooms and public spaces throughout the school? Do they adapt their rules in response to individual students' needs? If so, is that regarded as a strength or weakness of the system?
5. Is there evidence that the discipline system is racially or ethnically biased in its effects? How might you know? Do teachers and administrators express any concerns about that?

Debrief your visit: Back at your school, take time to further explore what you saw, what you learned, and what aspects of that school's practices you might consider using in your own setting. Pairing schools for two-way exchange visits—possibly about different topics over time, such as teams, hiring, scheduling, or evaluation—can create ongoing relationships and rich sources of ideas, feedback, and support.

Planning and implementing change within your school

Throughout the steps and processes proposed here—from reading and reflecting on the examples and lessons of the book, comparing one's own school with those in the cases, and learning about other schools from panelists, documents, and school visits—educators are likely to want to improve their own school context, whether that is a grade level or academic department, an entire school, or even a district or CMO.

Now what? It's no secret that changing schools in deep and meaningful ways is demanding work. When educators design new schools, they have the advantage of starting with a canvas that is mostly blank and where almost anything is possible. They can consider many options and choose the ones that seem most promising, given their students, mission, and goals. From the start, they can align the components and systems to work in sync so that they serve both teachers and students well. Educators at Kincaid and Naylor Charter Schools, Fitzgerald and Hurston Turnaround Schools, and the Lawrence Public Schools all had opportunities to create (or recreate) the full range of practices.

However, in most schools, practices such as hiring, curriculum, teamwork, evaluation, and discipline have developed separately over many years as changes have been layered on one another. It's not unusual for those practices to work at odds, generate disagreement, or cause confusion. In most schools, it's unrealistic to reform an entire workplace—better to start with an important, but manageable practice or two and discover that it's possible to achieve success

with reasonable effort and minimal disruption. Then having demonstrated the benefits of one change, you can expand your efforts.

Creating a student support team (SST). For example, a principal might decide with her teachers' endorsement to create a student support team (SST) like those at Dickinson, Fitzgerald, and Hurston. In forming the team, those creating an SST should consider:

1. What is the purpose of the SST? Does it focus primarily on students' academic progress or also monitor their personal development and social interactions?
2. With that purpose in mind, which teachers, administrators, and staff should be represented on the team? How will the school's diversity (by race, ethnicity, gender, and income level) be represented?
3. Will the SST regularly review the progress and well-being of all students or only those referred for review by classroom teachers? Will it confine itself to in-school services or refer students and families to outside community agencies?
4. When teachers present students to the SST, what kind of data or examples will they use to document and track students' academic or social-emotional strengths and difficulties?
5. Will parents be notified and involved when the SST identifies a student for additional monitoring, tutoring, or intervention?
6. How will the SST assess its progress and improve its performance?

As the SST plans its work, it should consider how its practices will fit with others currently used at the school. Will it complement, duplicate, or potentially interfere with them? For example:

1. How does the SST's process align with or supplement the practices of special education teachers? Does the SST need a structured system to communicate about students who are supported by both classroom teachers and specialists?
2. If the SST identifies inequities in the school's rules or certain teachers' enforcement practices, with whom and how will they raise those issues?
3. If the SST discovers evidence of parental neglect or abuse, what are their legal and professional obligations?
4. Will the work of the SST inform other practices such as students' class assignments?

Once the SST has begun its work, new issues, needs and challenges will inevitably emerge that must also be addressed. These might include:

1. Disagreements among the faculty about whether the school should identify or become involved in resolving family issues;
2. Individual teachers blaming students and families for academic failures that are more likely shortcomings in that teacher's instruction;
3. Complaints that SST members who provide students with support, such as a nurse, counselor, or social worker, unfairly shelter them from the school's discipline or performance standards; and
4. Requests for additional services that exceed the school's current capacity.

Whatever they are, these concerns should be addressed by the principal, SST, grade-level teams or full faculty, rather than ignored. Additional sources of information, such as simple, anonymous online surveys, can be used to learn more about these educators' hopes, concerns, preferences, and suggestions for improving their SST. In addition to addressing immediate concerns, teachers and administrators should continuously assess whether the changes they make improve the practice.

Supporting school-based change from the district office or CMO

I wrote this book from a bottom-up rather than a top-down perspective—wanting to directly understand teachers' experiences in their schools, rather than focusing on district administrators' efforts to manage teachers' work. Therefore, with few exceptions—for example, the accounts of pay reform by Baltimore City, MD and Lawrence, MA in Chapter 8—we learn about the districts' policies and practices indirectly from the descriptions and explanations of teachers and principals. However, because 9 of the 14 schools were administered by the Walker City School District, I also investigated and report on that district's human capital policies and practices and describe how they developed over time.

District and CMO administrators who read *Where Teachers Thrive* can gain a new perspective on the key practices that shape teachers' work experiences and how those then influence professional satisfaction, teachers' retention, and students' learning. In addition to the questions for guided reading and reflection provided for all readers, these school officials should consider:

1. **Current policies and practices.** Which policies and practices of our district or CMO are intended to create schools where teachers can best use their talents, skills, and efforts? How well do those policies and practices actually work and how do we know? Are they piecemeal and sometimes working at odds or mutually reinforcing and coherent? How might we improve them? What feedback loops exist or could be created to provide ongoing

information about how the policies are being implemented and how teachers are experiencing them?

2. **Selecting and assigning principals.** Given the key role that principals play in creating and sustaining productive work environments, how does our district or CMO select principals? Do we assign the more skilled and experienced leaders to low-income or wealthier schools? Do we give priority and recognition to principals who value teachers' ideas and encourage their leadership or to those who use their authority to elicit compliance with the system's mandates?
3. **School-based autonomy.** What level of autonomy do our principals exercise in managing the human capital practices of their school? For example, do they select their teachers, set their schedules, and allocate the school's resources? Which aspects of teachers' work are defined centrally and which are defined by the schools? If our district or CMO bargains collectively with a teachers union, do contract provisions tend to standardize practice or facilitate variation among the schools?
4. **Supports for principals.** How well is our district or CMO organized to provide support for principals as they manage their school workplace—recruiting, hiring, supervising and evaluating them; organizing teams; creating roles for teacher leaders; and scheduling time? Are our principals skilled instructors who can model the practices they expect from the teachers they supervise? What can we do to develop their capacity as instructional leaders and ensure they can learn from one another?
5. **School-to-school learning.** Do networks or pairs of schools collaborate or visit one another in order to learn about alternative approaches to implementing the system's policies? If we were to introduce such school-to-school collaboration as a pilot program, where might we begin?

Adopting policies that shape the school as a workplace for teachers

All 14 schools presented in *Where Teachers Thrive* were substantially affected by an array of federal and state policies. For example:

- **The federal *No Child Left Behind Act*** and related Massachusetts accountability policies (the annual MCAS standardized tests and subsequent school ratings) influenced not only the standing of these schools, but also what and how teachers taught, what hours they worked, and how they were paid;
- **The federal *Race to the Top* competition** led to a new statewide teacher evaluation policy and models for state intervention in chronically under-performing schools and districts (Fitzgerald K-5, Hurston K-8, Kincaid Charter, and Lawrence Public Schools);

- **The MA state charter school law** provided mechanisms for funding, governing and monitoring two additional charter schools in our study (Naylor, and Rodriguez), both of which exercised considerable autonomy in selecting, developing, and paying teachers; and
- **The MA collective bargaining law** entitled all teachers in district and charter schools that were not in receivership to organize and negotiate a union contract covering their hours, working conditions, and pay.

Obviously, different state policies create different contexts for districts, CMOs and their schools. Current and prospective policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels can compare their own policies with those affecting these MA schools and reflect on these issues and questions:

1. **Effects of policies.** In your state, what aspects of the teachers' workplace are regulated directly or indirectly by state policies? Do they tend to mandate compliance, promote competition, and/or build capacity within the schools? From your perspective, how do they work and how well do they work?
2. **State supports.** What types of support in curriculum, professional development, and teacher evaluation does the state provide? Do some schools and districts benefit from those services more than others?
3. **Pipeline programs for identifying and preparing school leaders.** Does your state provide pipeline programs for developing teacher leaders and principals? If so, do those programs include learning about and practicing shared decision-making?

Preparing and developing school leaders, district administrators, and policymakers

Where Teachers Thrive can serve as text—either the entire book or selected chapters—for courses and programs that prepare and support principals, district administrators, and education policymakers. Many prospective educational leaders are motivated by the prospect of achieving equity by improving students' learning opportunities and success in all schools, but they may not have considered the role that the teachers' workplace plays in reaching that goal. This book will help them understand that attending to both the teachers' instructional environment and the students' learning environment can augment their chances for success. Here are three suggested activities:

Learn from the case studies. Whether participants study on line or in person, these rich case studies will acquaint participants in courses and programs with new settings, challenges, policy contexts, and alternative solutions that they've never considered. Although I've geared the book to focus on what works, I've also included many examples of what failed in these schools and, therefore, what not to do. These are intended as cautionary tales to warn readers about the hazard of accepting ready-made solutions that oversimplify the problems they face.

Whatever the roles readers have and wherever they work, these examples will enrich their insight, augment their diagnostic skill, and expand their repertoire of responses as they move into and through practice.

The theories that anchor the analysis in several chapters—Liu on hiring (Chapter 1); Edmondson on teaming (Chapter 3); Scott and Davis on open and closed systems (Chapter 4); and Heifetz on adaptive leadership (Chapter 6)—provide engaging, detailed examples of how good theory can be a very practical tool for informing professional work. Instructors can use these to develop participants' analytic and practical skills.

In addition to participating in whole-class or small-group discussions in response to the questions for guided reading presented above, participants can reflect on their own setting and compare it with others, whether they're studying on line or in person. Further, they can conduct small supplementary studies and participate in simulations that help them understand the process of moving from good intentions to effective practice. Here are three examples:

Survey teachers about school-based practices. Program participants can learn more about variations in practice by analyzing one school's approach to evaluation, based on teachers' responses to a short, anonymous on-line survey. After providing non-identifying information (How long have you taught? What subject do you teach) teachers would respond to questions such as these:

1. How often are you observed by your evaluator? Are observations announced or unannounced?
2. Does your evaluator have experience in the subject you're teaching?
3. Do you receive feedback with recommendations for improvement?
4. If so, do those recommendations include support for developing new skills?
5. Overall, do you find the recommendations and support helpful?
6. Would you like to be observed more or less often?
7. Is the summative rating you eventually receive consistent with earlier observations?

Participants would then analyze the responses to their survey and summarize them, including any patterns that emerged based on teachers' years of experience or subject area. They would then compare their findings with those of others in their program and write a short paper analyzing similarities and differences in evaluation at the school they studied with the case examples in Chapter 7.

Interview educators about the effects of policies: Ask program participants to identify specific state policies that affect the teachers' work in a school they know. Such policies, which can be found on line, might authorize or regulate collective bargaining, charter schools, curriculum, standardized testing, school ratings, career ladders, or performance bonuses. Participants would then choose one of these policies that they think has an important impact, read it carefully, and interview two principals and two teachers about how that policy affects day-to-

day practice. Based on data from those interviews, participants would write a short paper describing and analyzing what they learned about the effects of that policy on practice, pointing out similarities and differences between the experiences and responses of the two schools.

Simulate efforts to improve principals' leadership. Organize an in-class simulation about a problem involving teacher leadership presented in Chapter 6— for example, Ms. Sterling's efforts to protect funding for extended learning time; Ms. Thomas's proposed change in the school schedule; and/or Ms. Forte's management of teacher teams. Then create sub-groups of students who meet and analyze the problem that the principal faced, discuss how she interpreted it, and decide whether taking a more inclusive approach to teacher leadership might have yielded a better outcome. Each group then would develop a plan to consult with that principal, who hypothetically has asked for advice. One person from each group plays the role of consultant while the instructor or other students assume the role of the principal, espousing and explaining that individual's beliefs and intention. After the short role plays of 5 to 10 minutes each, participants in the class would discuss what they saw and what they learned about how school leaders act and learn as they pursue change and how they respond to feedback and alternative suggestions.

Building knowledge through research

In our research at the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers over the past 20 years, we benefited immensely from studies of the teachers' workplace conducted by other scholars who analyzed administrative data sets or gathered new data through surveys, interviews, document analysis, and observations. These researchers grounded their work in theories drawn from economics, organizational sociology, political science, and psychology. They used quantitative, qualitative and, mixed methods to interpret their data. I cite many of their findings and contributions in *Where Teachers Thrive*.

In this book I've grounded my analysis in organizational theory, focusing on the school, which is nested in a particular local, state, and federal context. My colleagues and I have collected and analyzed new data, primarily using qualitative research methods—interviews, surveys, document analysis, and observations—in some cases supplemented by quantitative methods.

Research on the teacher's workplace continues to expand steadily. However, many studies stand alone, without being grounded theoretically or empirically in prior research. As a field, we have yet to synthesize much of what we have learned, leaving policymakers and practitioners to decide which findings to take seriously and what to do with them. Despite repeated assertions that there can be no "magic bullet" in this complex set of issues, both researchers and policymakers continue to hope and search for one. If this body of research is to be useful in any meaningful way that serves students and society, we researchers need to more fully integrate what we learn and to provide far more explanation of the role that context and implementation play in both positive and negative outcomes. We should be asking:

1. What components of the teachers' workplace influence their satisfaction, retention, and effectiveness?

2. What specific practices improve the quality of teachers' professional experience and contribute to their school's effectiveness?
3. What features of that context—policies, leadership, systems, and practices—influence the process of implementing and refining changes that have positive outcomes that matter, including equity?

This is complex work that will benefit from multiple studies conducted in a variety of settings including states where different policies regulate funding, licensing, testing, accountability, collective bargaining, and evaluation; districts with different politics, educational priorities, histories, and leadership; and schools with varying levels of wealth, different principals, and constituents who have different expectations and needs.

- **The role of context.** As the case studies in *Where Teachers Thrive* illustrate, teachers are simultaneously influenced by many of these contextual factors. For example, teachers in the turnaround school, Hurston K-8, were directly affected by the state's intervention, which brought a new principal and colleagues, additional funding, and an intense focus on students' tested performance. District officials appointed Mr. Hinds as its principal—a strong educator, leader and manager. The school benefited from having access to local non-profits that provided an extended school day for students and training for teacher leaders. Out of that context came many conditions that positively affected teachers' work—regular opportunities to collaborate with colleagues, forums where they could exercise leadership, a schoolwide approach to discipline, supports for students, roles and supervision for team facilitators, and frequent classroom observations and feedback that teachers valued. No single practice that worked for Hurston can be plucked from the case and implanted successfully in another school without regard to its context.
- **The process of implementation.** In addition to understanding how these nested contexts affect teachers' work, we need to learn much more about how changes are implemented. This calls for finding not only that a specific practice was effective or promising—teachers' instructional and student support teams, common planning time, career ladders, peer observations, instructional coaches—but also, how it was implemented and refined. Did teachers participate in selecting the change? Did the principal understand and explain its potential and limitations? Was the reform pilot-tested and refined before being adopted schoolwide? During implementation, was the reform aligned with other practices and systems in the school? Was it funded well so that teachers could be confident it would last? It's not enough to know what works or even in what context it works. We must also learn much more about how schools successfully implement the most promising practices.

Obviously, no single study can investigate efforts to improve the teachers' workplace in multiple contexts while also monitoring different approaches to implementing change and documenting a variety of outcomes. However, as individual researchers, we can more deliberately situate our studies in this larger landscape and specify what we learn and in what

contexts our findings are relevant. In doing so, we can better explain to policymakers and practitioners how to introduce and develop new laws, regulations, and practices in ways that offer lasting benefit to students. With that information and understanding, researchers can then pose better research questions, collect and analyze more informative data, and better integrate their findings into what is already known.

Questions for further study. With that broad perspective and those principles in mind, established scholars and doctoral students planning research will find that the cases in this book raise many important questions worth investigating. Here are some:

1. Turnover rates are broadly predicted by the income level of a school community. What are the characteristics and practices of schools that diverge notably from predicted patterns—for example, low-income schools that have high retention rates and middle- or high-income schools that experience low rates of teacher retention?
2. How do different sub-groups of teachers (e.g., novices and veterans; teachers of color and white teachers; teachers with traditional and alternative preparation; teachers with and without parenting responsibilities; teachers with or without a second job) respond to different professional opportunities and constraints (established curriculum; leadership roles; collaborative teams; parental engagement; or extended day for students)?
3. Do teachers in districts or CMOs that bargain collectively have more school-based opportunities for formal and informal leadership than teachers in districts that do not?
4. How do teachers' preferences for different compensation systems (a standardized salary scale, performance bonuses, career ladders) vary by state, local and school contexts?
5. What curriculum is available (and used) by teachers of both tested and untested subjects in various schools and contexts? What role do state and interim assessments play in teachers' curriculum and pedagogy?
6. How do race and ethnicity influence teacher recruitment and hiring in different types of schools? Does a match or mismatch (by race, ethnicity, or gender) between the principal and teachers influence those teachers' engagement and satisfaction?
7. What types of support do school districts and CMOs provide schools in recruiting, hiring, developing and evaluating teachers? From the perspectives of principals and teachers, is this support useful? If so, what types of assistance are most valued or needed?
8. School districts and CMOs provide principals with different levels of autonomy to establish practices that affect teachers' work environment (hiring, budgeting, scheduling, paying setting their teachers' working conditions). Do differences in the formal authority granted principals affect their approaches to teacher recruitment, hiring, support, and retention?

Are teacher leaders any more or less likely to pursue the principalship in systems that provide greater or less autonomy for school administrators?

9. What does a comparative analysis of state education policies reveal about teachers' professional influence and discretion? Are policies and regulations geared to individuals, schools, or districts? Do they mandate compliance, create incentives and rewards for improved performance, and/or develop organizational capacity? What are the implications of these policies for teachers' work?