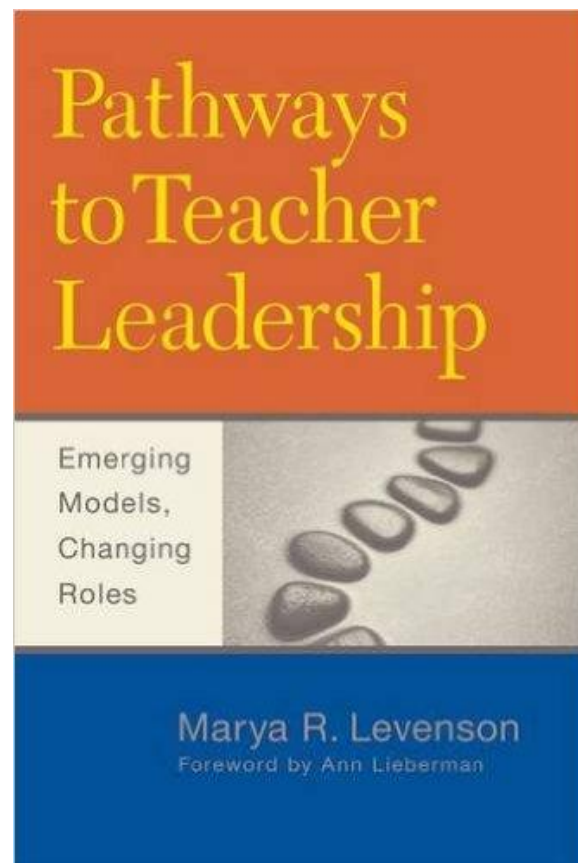Reviewed by Donna Cherveny
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Teacher leadership is a notable topic worthy of discussion. From leadership in the classroom to leadership in policy-making, teachers are emerging from isolated classrooms to assume school leadership positions deeply impacting the future of education. Top-down administration is taking a backseat to make room for schools being led by teachers with regard to classroom instruction as well as the institutional culture of schools. Levenson (2014) has joined the teacher leadership discussion with her book, *Pathways to Teacher Leadership:  Emerging Models, Changing Roles.*

From the intriguing title of the book to the well-organized layout of the concepts in the book, Levenson (2014) has captured a glimpse into the world of teacher leadership. The book title parallels the content of the book as the text itself describes trails to teacher leadership along with how some teachers have followed these trails to leadership positions within their schools and beyond. Varying pathways have been described through case studies of teacher leaders which draw the reader closer to the

topic addressed. Additionally, Levenson (2014) offers a synthesis of the case studies grouped by the types of leadership demonstrated by the teachers in the case studies. These syntheses create a cohesive feel to the book while allowing Levenson (2014) to verbalize conclusions based on the findings from the case studies. Each of the first five chapters provides one of these syntheses while the final chapter offers a comprehensive summation of the first five chapters.

Levenson (2014) began the book with an introduction into the concept of teacher leadership. In this introduction, Levenson (2014) stated that the book is "written about and for teachers who are taking leadership in public schools" (p. 1), but her audience reaches farther than teachers in leadership positions. The content of the book is beneficial to teachers seeking leadership positions and those administrators who are seeking to instill more leadership among teachers. Furthermore, in the introduction, Levenson (2014) stated that "by capturing the stories of actual teacher leaders and their principals, this book shows how we can empower teacher leaders within and beyond schools and enable their voices to be heard" (p. 1). This statement indicated the true purpose of the book as it is not only an informational text, but Levenson (2014) also offered an inadvertent call to action for teachers to explore leadership opportunities. Additionally, the introduction offers background information such as a definition of teacher leadership being when teachers "act to improve instruction, strengthen the culture and organization of schools, or speak out on policies and practices that affect schools" (p. 2). The broad concepts of instructional and institutional leadership are introduced with more detailed discussion in the chapters to follow. Levenson (2014) solidified the introduction with a description of her own journey as a teacher and a leader which lends credence to the content and concepts discussed in the book.

The first two chapters of the book revolved around case studies and discussion of teachers in instructional leadership positions. One chapter cited case studies of second stage teachers, teachers with four to ten years of experience, in traditional school settings. The other chapter involved discussion of case studies of beginning teachers in urban charter schools. Each chapter brought differing stories from case study participants that defined and described the pathways followed to teacher leadership in addition to the case study participants' perceptions of their own leadership journey. Reflections made by Levenson (2014) in the concept of instructional leadership included the reason for imploring instructional leadership and challenges that may be faced by instructional leaders. According to Levenson (2014), instructional leadership is an "essential part of improving student learning, recruiting, and retaining strong teachers" (p. 11). Student learning is questioned in conjunction with instructional methods implemented by teachers within the instructional leader's own classroom and school. Differences were noted by Levenson (2014) in the preparation of teachers for assuming instructional leadership roles such as the preparation of teachers for leadership positions as well as the experience levels of teachers stepping up to leadership positions. In urban charter schools, Levenson (2014) found that beginning teachers were being asked to take on instructional leadership roles. Traditional schools sought second-stage teachers for these same positions. Commonalities noted between urban charter school and traditional suburban school instructional leaders included the stress of taking a leadership role in addition to the already hefty requirements of being a classroom teacher, the utilization of mentors for encouragement of instructional leaders, and the balance of being an instructional leader without creating negative feelings between themselves and colleagues. Levenson (2014) noted that teachers stepping into an

instructional leadership role may face resistance from other teachers who are more seasoned or less approving of criticism. According to Levenson (2014), one of the instructional leaders interviewed stated that "learning how to work with peers often requires acquiring different skills than those needed to become an effective teacher of adolescents" (p. 30). More often in urban charter schools than suburban traditional schools, mentors helped educate the teacher leader in the school culture as well as aiding the teacher leader in navigating the challenges of becoming a leader among their peers. Instructional leaders were noted by Levenson (2014) to be "reflective educators who have retained a spirit of inquiry about teaching and learning, and a passion for their profession" (p. 30), and Levenson (2014) has thoroughly supported this statement with evidence presented in the case studies of instructional leaders from a variety of schools.

In addition to the discussion of instructional leadership, Levenson (2014) dedicated a chapter to institutional leadership. According to Levenson (2014), teachers who are "motivated by a desire to give voice and support underrepresented groups in the school" (p. 51) seek roles as institutional leaders. These leaders address school wide policies and issues without a definitive leadership title within the school. Institutional leaders look toward the bigger picture of their school as a whole and the educational system outside of their school. No longer does the teacher function in the isolation of a classroom. The teacher actively seeks policy changes in the school that may be regarded as having a negative effect on instruction, but this expedition into leadership seemingly adds to the already weighty workload of teaching. According to Levenson (2014), teachers who move into institutional leadership roles may not remain in those roles permanently. Institutional leaders tend to flow into and out of these positions at will since there is no definitive title associated with these positions. Challenges faced by institutional leaders

include the lack of administrative support and the allowance of time for developing instructional questions and initiatives. According to Levenson (2014), institutional leadership flourished at some schools while it was stifled at others. Reasons for this disjointed discovery include the culture of the school as it supports teacher initiatives, the relationships among teachers, and energy and dedication of the teachers to change. Many institutional leaders rise from the ashes of frustration over school policies they feel negatively impact their instructional abilities. These leaders seek to make school wide changes to address these policies for the benefit of their students.

While the first three chapters of this book were dedicated to presenting case studies and their findings about teacher leaders, the fourth chapter addressed the need for supporting administration for these teacher leaders. According to Levenson (2014), principals need to support teacher leaders through the provision of time and space for developing leadership, the encouragement of contributions by teachers, and the alteration of a top-down managerial style in the school. In order to effectively support teacher leaders, principals need to create a culture where teachers are comfortable sharing their visions and initiatives free from harsh criticism. When a teacher approaches a principal, the principal should listen openly even if the teacher is disagreeing with current school policy. Decisions regarding the teacher's initiative should be transparent so that all constituents know the reasons supporting the principal's decision. Additionally, the principal should be prepared for the conflicts that may arise from decisions that affect particular groups or the entire school population. Through creating and maintaining a school culture that supports and appreciates teacher leadership, principals can learn to rely on teachers' classroom expertise to shape the future of the school.

Following case studies of instructional leadership, institutional leadership, and

principal support of teacher leadership, Levenson (2014) turned the attention to emerging models of teacher leadership in Boston. During this presentation of models, the reader can conclude that none of the models bears more weight than the others based on Levenson's (2014) descriptions. Case studies for each of the models are presented along with challenges faced by those implementing each. The underlying common factor from each of the models is the support of teacher leadership within the schools. While some of the models introduced outside entities to aid in restructuring the school's culture, other models tapped its current faculty pool for leadership positions. Each of the models discussed by Levenson (2014) was clearly supported with data as to the overall structure of the model.

Policy leadership was the topic of the final content chapter by Levenson (2014). This chapter delved deeper into the teacher leaders reaching outside their own school walls on the topics of policy development and implementation. Often, teachers use networks to share resources or seek a sympathetic ear, but Levenson (2014) noted that teachers may use these channels for amplifying their voices on state and federal educational policies. Educators no longer simply close the classroom door and retreat into their own little world. Teachers are voicing opinions and recommendations for policy change through networks and blogs where teachers can band together to make themselves heard. Levenson (2014) also used this chapter to offer a call for action where policymakers take note of teachers' opinions because teachers are the individuals who are expected to implement educational policies.

The final chapter of the text took the opportunity to restate the main points from the earlier chapters. Levenson (2014) noted that teacher leadership must be developed with flexible supports and administrative commitment. Through a combination of these concepts with a culture of trust and teachers who are not afraid to lead, a sustained reform for educational instruction, institutions, and policies. Levenson (2014) presented a strong case for developing teacher leadership along with provision of multiple routes to teacher leadership. The information from this book would benefit teachers who are seeking leadership positions, administrators who are committed to encouraging teacher leadership, and teachers who are simply frustrated with the state of education.

## About the Reviewer

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Donna Cherveny, Ed.S., is a doctoral student at Liberty University who also works as an adjunct for Brenau University's Adult and Graduate Studies Program. She is a devoted wife of eighteen years with three amazing children who fuel her passion for education.

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