

Staff Management

As a teacher-led school, staff management and oversight responsibilities will be distributed differently than in a traditional school structure. The Lead Teacher will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Academic Program while the Business Manager will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of school operations.

The Lead Teacher will participate on a regular basis in the direct instruction of students and serve as faculty for professional development activities. The Lead Teacher will not have a full teaching load, but rather teach an hour or two a day at most. The Lead Teacher is responsible for organizing and implementing curriculum, instructional and assessment programs for students and meeting the duties of teaching as outlined in laws and policies. During nonstudent contact time, the Lead Teacher is responsible for assisting in the development of standards-based curriculum and assessment opportunities, research-based instructional methods, aligning of materials and resources to curriculum outcomes, facilitating teacher support and evaluations and other teacher leadership responsibilities. The Lead Teacher will be the primary point of contact for parents, teachers, community and district personnel associated with the academic program (Instructional Superintendent, Instructional Specialists, Curriculum Offices, etc.). The Lead Teacher will also handle discipline issues.

Duties of this position include but are not limited to:

1. Professional Development:

- a. Training early career and Professional Teachers, other Lead Teachers and Mentor Teachers
- b. Observing and providing peer assistance for colleagues.
- c. Participating in professional development activities.
- d. Participating in a formalized peer review process as a formative evaluator.
- e. Assisting in the coordination of all school based professional development opportunities linked to individual professional development plans and job competencies.

2. Curriculum:

- a. Collaborating with colleagues to construct benchmark lessons.
- b. Serving as the official liaison between the school site and the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Services.
- c. Assisting with identifying the curriculum needs of the faculty.
- d. Planning and managing the development of standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment plans and strategies.
- e. Assisting in the adoption of curriculum resources that are consistent with the district's curriculum.
- f. Updating service learning themes/units and supervising service learning theme/unit writing.
- g. Ensuring that all substitutes have lesson plans.
- h. Coordinating communication and planning among all learning communities.

3. Leadership:

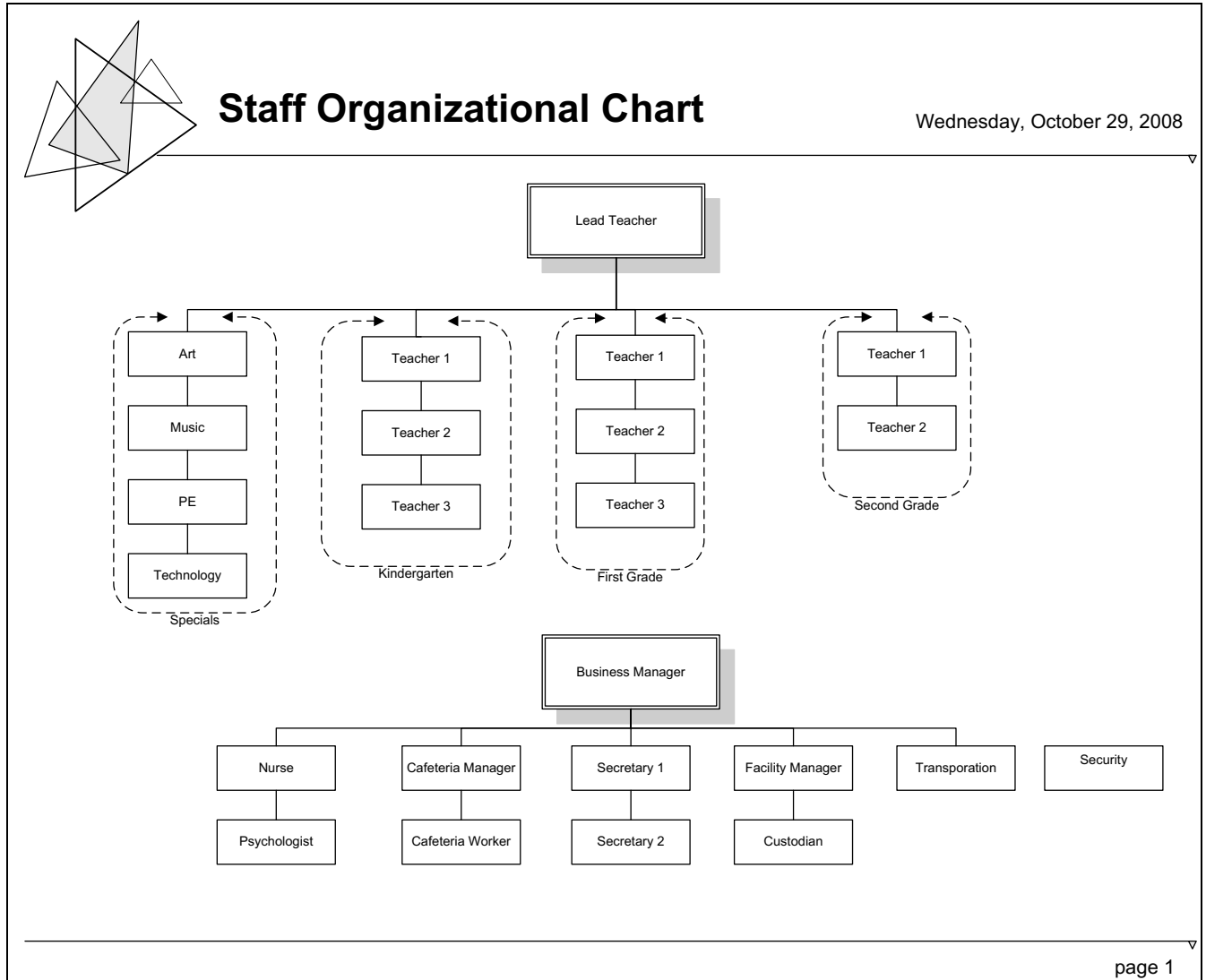
- a. Serving as a resource to the CSC and working with staff members to develop, implement, and evaluate the school's School Improvement Plan.
- b. Supporting and assisting in implementing the district vision.
- c. Writing or overseeing the writing of grants to aid in meeting the goals of the School Improvement Plan.
- d. Assisting in the coordination of the school's testing program (CELA, Benchmarks, CSAP, etc.).
- e. Communicating with Instructional Superintendent and Specialists.
- f. Overseeing the development and implementation of the School Improvement Plan.

The Business Manager will be responsible for overseeing the staff involved in all aspects of school operations. While some decision-making authority will be distributed to certain Teacher Teams that will be described later in this document, the Business Manager will be responsible for ensuring that those decisions are carried out in a fiscally responsible and accurate manner. For instance, the School Leadership Team will set priorities for allocating financial resources that align with priorities in the School Improvement Plan and in sync with district priorities. The Business Manager will be responsible for the financial processes required to carry out the decision(s) and to ensure that decisions align with the school mission, vision and improvement plan. The Business Manager **may** also have instructional responsibilities involved with the implementation of passion areas, service learning and small group interventions.

Duties of this position are as follows:

1. Finance:
 - a. Collect, review and processes financial information and creates necessary financial reports. Maintains as established, all aspects of a complete set of financial records, ensuring accurate and timely processing. Develop with input from administrators and staff a complete and integrated budget including all funds available to the school. Oversight of the following financial processes:
 - Accounts payable/receivables
 - Purchasing/receiving
 - Journal entries and ledgers
 - Account reconciliations
 - Student Activity Fund
 - b. Act as a liaison to staff on designated financial activities, and provides training, technical direction and guidance on bookkeeping and financial procedures and practices, as directed.
 - c. Develop and maintain effective working relationships with general accounting and other departments.
 - d. Act to consistently ensure the accuracy, confidentiality and security of designated financial records. Keeps the immediate supervisor informed of all exceptions, variances or violations to established.
2. Facilities:
 - a. Oversee Facility Schedule and Master Calendar
 - b. Provide oversight and act as liaison to the following District Departments and/or functions within the school, providing broad direction as well as individual support and management.
 - Food and Nutrition Services
 - Technology Services
 - Facility Management
 - Safety and Security
 - Transportation
 - School of Choice
 - Student Services
3. With the Lead Teacher, facilitates school communication with students, parents and the community through creation and implementation of targeted communications strategies.
4. Assigns work and provides technical direction and guidance to secretarial/reception positions.

The chart below illustrates lines of accountability for the various staff members at the Math and Science Leadership Academy.



Discipline

Students at the Math and Science Leadership Academy will be held to the highest standards of behavior and performance. Our philosophy of discipline will be centered on building a culture of personal responsibility, accountability to the school family and experience of natural consequences for your actions. A combination of Conscious Discipline strategies and Love and Logic principles will be the foundation of our approach to preventing and addressing student discipline issues at the classroom level. Issues that cannot be handled to the classroom level or within the grade level will be subject to the existing policies and procedures of Denver Public Schools. The school Climate and Culture Team will be responsible for identifying the specific steps and actions that will be taken at each level of the discipline ladder. The Lead Teacher will be responsible for ensuring that those steps are carried out

Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive social and emotional intelligence classroom management program that empowers both teachers and students. It leads teachers, providers, schools and programs through a process that promotes permanent behavior changes in both teachers and children. The change is from a traditional compliance model of discipline to a relationship-based, community model (Bailey, p. 12). It is built on three major premises:

1. Controlling and changing ourselves is possible and has profound impact on others.
2. Connectedness governs behavior.
3. Conflict is an opportunity to teach.

A key component of Conscious Discipline is the creation of the school family. This is achieved through specific strategies that teach students that they are an important part of the class and school. For example, each student has a job that supports the growth of the class, each time a student is absent there are rituals for wishing them well and when they return there are rituals to welcome them back and support their return. Traditional classroom management programs focus on punishment and exclusion that disrupts the learning environment. This approach focuses on teaching student the value that each member has to the community and the contribution that each person makes to the success of that community. Issues or challenges are opportunities to teach students appropriate ways to conduct themselves; they are also opportunities for students to learn how their actions impact others and to develop an internal locus of control that is a key component of future success (Gifford).

The concepts of Conscious Discipline (Fay) blend well with strategies from Love and Logic. Love and Logic is based on student experiencing the natural consequences of their behavior both negative and positive. Some of the techniques are:

1. Neutralizing arguing specific techniques
2. Locking-in sadness or empathy before delivering consequences
3. Setting limits with enforceable statements
4. Sharing control through lots of small choices
5. Building relationships with the One Sentence Intervention
6. The Anticipatory Consequence

An example of classroom expectations are:

1. I will treat you with respect so that you know how to treat me.
2. You are welcome to remain in class as long as you do not cause a problem for anyone else.
3. If you cause a problem, I will expect you to fix it.
4. If you cannot or do not fix it, I will do something.
5. What I do will depend on the unique circumstances and the special person.

Both of these approaches are supportive of students, approach challenges as opportunities to teach and teach students to be responsible for their own actions. In addition, they have a substantial research based that supports their use with a wide range of students and connects to an increase in student achievement both if the short-run and long-run.

At the Math and Science Leadership Academy we will make every effort to handle discipline issues at the classroom level with approaches that teach and support both teachers and students. In the event that issues cannot be handled at the classroom level, the DPS Discipline Policy will take effect. The specifics of how lower level infractions will be handled will be determined by the Climate and Culture Team and School Leadership Team.

Attendance

Good student attendance is crucial in order for students to connect with the school community, participate in school activities and improve student learning. Students will be expected to attend school every day that they are healthy and able to do so. The philosophy of the Math and Science Leadership Academy is to prevent student absences by creating a school family that clearly communicates to students that they are a valuable part of their class and school and that they are cared for and supported by their school family. Each classroom will develop rituals and routines that require student participation and engagement. For instance, when a student is absent the class will develop a routine where they wish that student well. When that student returns to school they will be greeted by a student whose job it is to welcome them back. Each class will also develop a specific routine to communicate to students what they missed during class time. Clearly communicating to students that they are an important part of the class and that something was missing while they were gone helps students to feel important and will increase their engagement in school.

On the occasions when students are absent from school, the parent or guardian will receive a call from the school. The purpose of this call is to verify that the student did not come to school and determine the reason for the absence. Students who are not ill will be invited to come to school later that day. Students who are ill, of course will be excused.

If a student is absent three consecutive days and the reason is unknown, a letter will be sent home in addition to the phone call mentioned above. If a child has five cumulative days absent and the reason is unknown then a staff member will visit the home to determine the reason for the absence. We will work together with families on an individual basis to address and resolve the cause of the absences. If unexcused absences exceed 10 then the appropriate district policies and procedures will occur.

Schedules

Daily

	K	1st	2nd
8:15	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting
8:30	Readers Workshop	Skills	Readers Workshop
8:45			
9:00	Specials	Readers Workshop	
9:15			
9:30			
9:45	Readers Workshop	Readers Workshop	Writers Workshop
10:00	Skills	Specials (3 classes)	
10:15	Lunch		Lunch
10:30			
10:45	Independent Reading	Lunch	Lunch
11:00			
11:15	Writing	Writers Workshop	Specials (3 classes)
11:30	Math		
11:45	ELD		Mathematics
12:00	Enrichment - Art	Mathematics	
12:15			
12:30	Quiet time	Social Studies	Skills
12:45			
1:00	Centers	ELD	Social Studies
1:15			
1:30	Science	ELD	ELD
1:45			
2:00	Dismissal	Science	Science
2:15			
2:30	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
2:45			
3:00	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
3:15			
3:30	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
3:45			

Annual schedule – The Math and Science Leadership Academy will adhere to the annual calendar that traditional DPS Schools follow.

Parent and Community Involvement

Parents and community members are active participants in the school community and are included as learners, teachers and leaders within the school community.

Learners

Parents will have the opportunity to be learners by engaging parent education classes that will be offered at the school via technology. These classes will be initiated before the opening of the school as both a community outreach and student recruitment strategy. Parents will have the opportunity to take computer classes in basic computer skills, Office applications, English development and utilizing the Internet. They will also have the opportunity to learn how they can support their children in their use of technology in school. Classes might include Everyday Math Online Games, Reading Plus, using podcasts and other free online resources.

The Math and Science Leadership Academy will have regular (monthly) parent participation events where parents can come and learn how to support their children at home. These events might take the form of pancake breakfasts or spaghetti dinners where parents met with teachers for casual conversations. Or they could be math and science nights where students share projects and activities that they have done in class. These could be sessions where parents learn the math games that they can play with their children or parenting classes so that they can use Love and Logic principles at home.

Teachers

Parents and Community Members will be Passion Area Teachers. Community resources are frequently untapped and, therefore, underutilized. Parents, like students, have a wide variety of gifts and talents that could be shared with the school community. Parents and community members will be invited to share their unique gifts with students by leading and/or facilitating passion areas.

Parents and community members will play an integral role in the implementation and success of service learning projects. A key component of service learning is student choice in the selection of a project that impacts the local community. Communication, collaboration and cooperation with community members will not only serve to strengthen the projects, but also connect students with key members of the community at-large. Parents and community members will be invited to do everything from chaperone field trips to lead conversations, and from helping students to develop action plans to working wide-by-side with students as they carry out their projects.

Leaders

There will be parent representatives on all Teacher Teams including Curriculum, Climate and Culture, Data, Professional Development, Leadership and Collaborative School Culture. They will offer parent and community perspectives on the effectiveness of the school effectiveness, structure and operation.

The school will have a Parent, Teacher, and Student Association (PTSA). This group may coordinate some of the monthly parent engagement events mentioned above. This group will provide insight and support to the school by identifying areas of strength and need. They will also help to raise additional funds for

projects of their choosing. This group might also help to coordinate parent volunteers who will be welcome at all school functions.

Advisory Group

The Math and Science Leadership Academy will also have an advisory committee made up of parents, community members, business owners, education experts, administrators and other stakeholders in education. This advisory group will serve as a resource to the Lead Teacher and help shape and guide the success of the school. The Design Team has already been actively seeking members for the advisory group and the following have already been identified:

Carole Basile, Associate Professor, School of Education and Human Development, UCD

Dan Morris, CM Consulting

Linda Sosa, Public Relations Director, St. Cajetan Church

Nancy Shakowski, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Former Principal

Ann Byrd, Center for Teaching Quality

Pat Sanchez, Principal, West High School

Wendy Lanier, Principal, Henry World School

Linda Barker, Director Teaching and Learning, Colorado Education Association

Peg Portscheller, Focused Leadership Solutions, Former Superintendent

Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Criteria for student recruitment will be determined at a later date. We will seek to have a demographic balance with the following factors: gender, SES, Special Populations, and Academic Achievement.

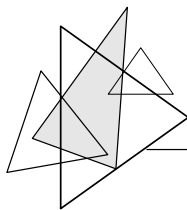
Enrollment numbers are pre-determined.

Students will be recruited primarily from the attendance area of the school. This is based on the assumption that we will be in Southwest Denver where most of the students fall into the targeted areas of ELLs, students of poverty, and students who have choiced-out of Denver Public Schools. The overall culture of the families in the area will require a more personal approach than a simple advertising campaign with area meetings. The specific strategies that will be employed are as follows:

- Create marketing materials that consists of flyers, posters and pamphlets that are in both English and Spanish.
- Door-to-door recruitment in the neighborhood in the attendance area of the school.
- Establish a presence in the local markets, churches, and other business establishments.
- Create collaborative partnerships with local organizations and utilize these partnerships for recruitment.
- Provide parent and community education classes in order to develop relationships with the community. Classes will allow us to demonstrate the services that we will provide to parents and students.

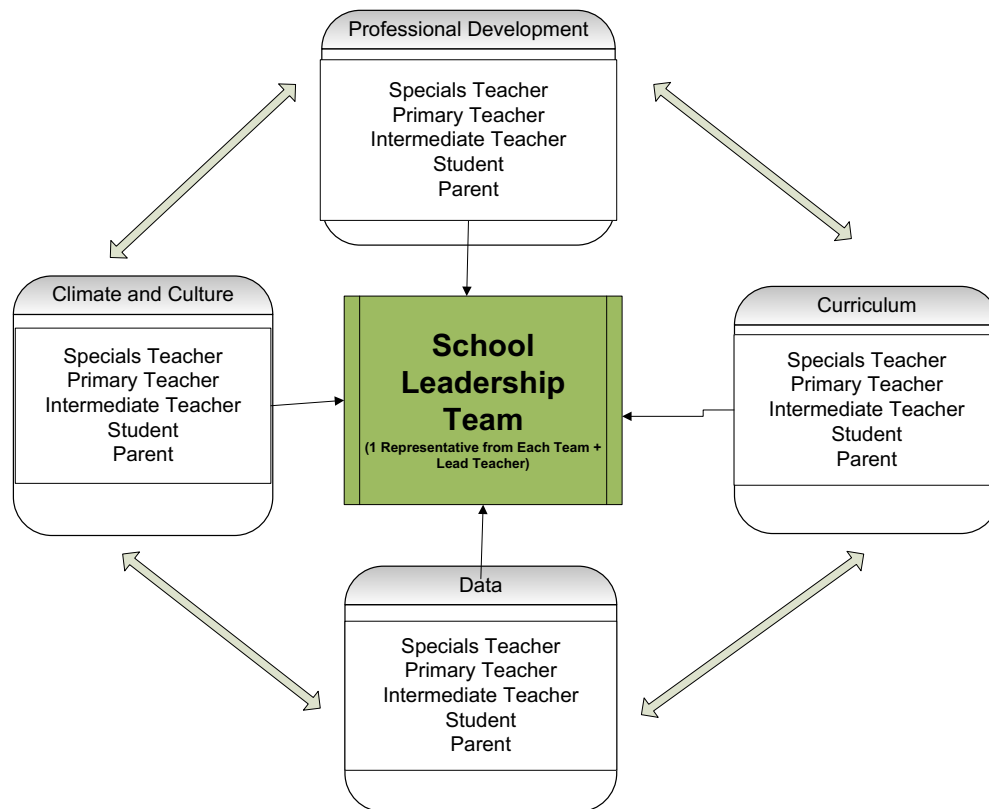
- Identify, contact and inform the students who have choiced-out of Denver Public Schools about the Math and Science Leadership Academy and invite them to return.
- Identify, contact and inform the parents of student whose children are on waiting lists for kindergarten at surrounding schools and those in Head Start programs.
- Mail materials to all homes in the attendance area and those who have left the district for another choice of schools.

School Leadership



Team Structure

Monday, September 22, 2008



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The Math and Science Leadership Academy will be a teacher-led school. This will be reflected in the way that the school operates, how decisions are made and the way in which school wide policies are determined. All too often policies are set that have significant impact on classroom instruction without the input or perspective of teachers. Teachers, as professionals and as the personnel that are charged with carrying out policies, should always be at the table to provide their perspective on how those policies will play out in the classroom.

The diagram above illustrates the Teacher Teams that will be the backbone of how the school functions. Each Team will be charged with determining the needs, creating appropriate policies and procedures, and identifying specific steps that should be carried out to address their given area. All of the teams will be mutually informative. For example, the Data Team will inform the Professional Development Team so that it can make the best decisions for the Professional Development Plan for the school. Likewise, the Professional Development Team will inform the Curriculum Team as it oversees the implementation of the math, science and technology-focused curriculum.

Each team will utilize consensus voting to make decisions. In this model all members must support or agree that they do not oppose a decision in order for it to be adopted. It is absolutely crucial that all staff members be on the same page and willing to support the policies and procedures that govern the school. Research supports the concept of collaborative decision-making in terms of its ability to empower all members of the community and ensure buy-in to its implementation. The Lead Teacher will serve as an ad hoc member of each of the Teams and serve as the Chair of the Leadership Team. The School Leadership Team will be made up of elected representatives of each of the Teacher Teams, as well as the Association Representative. The Leadership Team will be responsible for conducting teacher evaluations as explained in detail in the Staffing, Review, Grievance and Dismissal section of this document. The Leadership Team will also have input into the budget, scheduling, hiring and other governance issues

The Math and Science Leadership Academy may very well be the first teacher-led school in a traditional school district. All other examples that we have found have been charter schools. While there is substantial research to support the concept of teacher empowerment and collaboration, teacher led schools are so new that they have very little research in the area of student performance as measured by student test scores. It is clear, however that the traditional school model that was created over 100 years ago is not serving our students today, especially in the middle school. Schools that have conducted research have found the following:

From a March 2007 Phi Delta Kappan article on EdVisions(teacher-led) schools:

- Students are more motivated and interested in learning.
- Schools consistently achieved Adequate Yearly Progress in both Reading and Math.
- Schools were in the top 25% of comparable schools.
- School reliably met NCLB standards for attendance and graduation.
- Student perceptions of autonomy, belongingness and 'learning' goal orientation were higher in EdVisions schools.
- Students has a higher level of engagement than students in traditional schools.

The Avalon School in St. Paul, Minnesota had the following results:

- They met all of the their AYP Goals for 2007
- In Grade 7 students meeting or exceeding standards in Reading was 20 percentage points higher than the state (73% vs. 53%). In Mathematics, the school exceeded the state average by 13 percentage points (75% vs. 62%).

In terms of teacher empowerment: The Public Agenda's survey of teacher in 2003 where they asked 'How interested would you be in working in a (charter) school run and managed by teachers?' The results:

- 58% of teachers said they would be somewhat or very interested
- 65% of the under five-year teachers would be somewhat or very interested
- 50% of the over 20-year teachers would be somewhat or very interested.

It is believed that these percentages would have been higher had the word 'charter' been removed from the question. These very interesting results indicate that this may be an approach to address the attrition rate of new teachers. Approximately 50% of all new teachers leave the profession in the first 5 years. The percentage is even higher in Denver. It is commonly understood that this new generation of workers is looking for different working conditions and opportunities to lead and grow. Teacher-led schools may serve not only as a new way to serve our students, but a new way to retain and develop the next generation of teachers.

These results also indicate that teachers who are in the field as a profession are quite interested in utilizing their experience and expertise to work in and create schools that work for teachers and students.

Ted Kolderie and Tim McDonald made a case for teacher-led school in their article "An Explosion of Pedagogical Agents" in the Spring 2008 edition of Threshold. They said that:

- These new models of schooling will attract different kinds of teachers.
- Since teachers run the school, they will have a stake in their success.
- These schools have a stringer sense of community and connectedness.
- They are more responsive to student needs.
- Parents appreciate the law and order of teacher-led schools where educators are responsible for discipline.
- Teachers who are encouraged to act as professionals with meaningful control over their professional practice can improve schooling.
- Students experience the benefits of advancements in teaching and environment of teamwork.

Bailey, Conscious Discipline, Loving Guidance, 2000.

Fay, www.loveandlogic.com .

Farris-Berg, Kim, Ed Dirkswager, Joe Graba, and Ted Kolderie. Teachers in Professional Practice: An Inventory of New Opportunities for Teachers, Education Evolving, August 2006.

Gifford, Briceno-Perriott, Miazano, "Locus of Control: Academic Achievement and Retention in a Sample of First-Year University Students," Journal of College Admission, Spring 2006.

Kolderie, Ted, Tim McDonald, "An Explosion of Pedagogical Agents", Threshold, Spring 2008.

Newell, Ronald, Phi Delta Kappan, March 2007.