

# Replacing a Teacher Leader: When a Teacher Leader Leaves a Training Site



Reading Recovery Brief

Teacher leaders play a pivotal role for their Reading Recovery training sites. Planning to secure this role is critical, especially in sites with only one teacher leader.

A Reading Recovery teacher leader trains teachers, provides ongoing professional development and support for trained teachers, analyzes and reports student outcomes, and communicates with local educators and the public. When a teacher leader plans to leave a site, the following steps are critical:

1. Notify the trainer(s) at your affiliated university training center about the situation.
2. Begin planning to train a new person from your site for the position, or advertising and hiring a trained teacher leader.
3. Make temporary plans for the stability of your program until a new teacher leader can be found.

Employing a trained teacher leader may seem like an inexpensive and quick solution. However, training someone from within the educational system has advantages because the trainee already understands the school system and has established strong relationships within the system. Because there are only a limited number of trained teacher leaders available, it is a good idea to work on planning to train a new person while you advertise for a trained teacher leader.

### *Searching for a Trained Teacher Leader*

The best way to begin a search for a trained teacher leader is to contact the university training center with which you affiliate. The university training center trainer may be aware of possible candidates available for the position.

In addition, you can contact the Reading Recovery Council of North America to post the job opening on their website.

Local and regional advertising is a possibility, and the trainer can help review your ad copy. Once you find candidates, be sure to call the trainers who trained them to request recommendations.

Don't be surprised if your search leads to frustration and few viable candidates. Existing sites don't like to lose their teacher leaders either!

### *Training a New Teacher Leader*

A second option is to train a new teacher leader. This option is especially valuable when there are potential local candidates who know the school system. This option involves finding funding to cover the cost of training and then recruiting a qualified candidate. Additionally, arrangements must be made for the effective operation of Reading Recovery while your new teacher leader is being trained. The trainer at your university training center can help by providing guidelines for selecting a candidate, training details, and cost information.

### *Temporary Arrangements While Training a New Teacher Leader*

The trainer at the university training center where your site is affiliated will work collaboratively with your site coordinator to design a temporary 1-1/2-year plan while a new teacher leader is trained.

Eventually the site coordinator will need to write to the university training center to request a waiver to the standards and guidelines in order to implement this plan.

While the new teacher leader is being trained, there are critical tasks to be addressed in the temporary plan.

1. Temporarily employ a trained teacher leader to coordinate and provide the necessary services during the training year. This includes conducting the ongoing professional development (continuing contact) sessions for trained Reading Recovery teachers during the year and supporting the new teacher leader to ensure the professional development responsibility can be transferred when training is completed.
2. Ensure that the temporarily employed trained teacher leader's contract allows enough time for this person to coordinate Reading Recovery and complete the following tasks:
  - a. Provide the required number of continuing contact sessions and school visits for trained teachers.

- b. Collect, monitor, approve, and submit data to the International Data Evaluation Center and arrange for fees to be paid for data services.
- c. Assist the trained teachers in writing school reports for their principals.
- d. Make sure a site report is collaboratively written for the previous year by the site coordinator and temporary teacher leader.
- e. Ensure the teacher leader has time for solving instructional and implementation problems that arise during the year.
- f. Recruit a class of teachers to be trained by the newly trained teacher leader for the next year.
- g. Order replacement books and materials as well as sets of books and materials for the new class.

Strong administrative support and coordination is needed to achieve tasks during the transition between teacher leaders for a site. While some tasks can be handled by the site coordinator, most tasks require the expertise of a trained teacher leader.

### *Resources for Problem Solving*

A trainer at the university training center is the best person to help a site find a trained teacher leader who can be temporarily employed for your site.

Since very few full-time trained teacher leaders are available, sometimes teacher leaders who work elsewhere are willing to provide part-time assistance to help out at a site that is training a new teacher leader. However, temporarily employed teacher leaders must have an on-site coordinator. The use of a temporary teacher leader may be necessary, but it is not optimal. Teacher leader stability is essential to your site's successful Reading Recovery implementation.