

## Teacherpreneurism without borders: Noah Zeichner

### Teaching locally, inspiring educators globally

Noah Zeichner, National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) and [2014 World Educator of the Year](#), teaches social studies at Chief Sealth International High School in the Seattle Public Schools. He was the Center for Teaching Quality's very first teacherpreneur, working for three years in a hybrid position that combined classroom instruction with leadership that extended worldwide:

- Leading [World Water Week](#) to ensure students on two campuses mastered global competencies through active service learning;
- Co-designing ten new teacher leadership positions (four of them hybrid roles) with his district to grow Seattle's international education program and align it with the teaching and learning demands of the Common Core; and
- Launching a global network of teacher leaders with CTQ and the Asia Society to spread best practices among top-performing nations.

Noah has defined for us, better than any consultant or administrator has, what it means for us to be an international school and what it means to teach global competencies to our students.

- David Katz, teacher



### Lessons on leading without leaving

- **Extra time yields extraordinary results.** Noah had long been a leader of other teachers, offering informal mentoring and broad collaboration with colleagues. But principal Aida Fraser-Hammer noted that "it is his extra time as a teacherpreneur that pushes things forward" as he draws more teachers into work to design district-level programs and deepen student engagement.
- **The best teacherpreneurs "lead from the middle."** Teachers, administrators, and students alike say that Noah is a successful leader not because he directs others, but because he engages and supports them as co-leaders in his work. "He starts conversations, he convenes people through similar interests, and he shows others how they can do do the same," says colleague Heather Griffin.
- **Technology keeps teacher leaders connected with the world while based in the classroom.** Noah has taught in Ecuador and joined delegations to Singapore and Brazil to explore their education systems. But virtual tools like the CTQ Collaboratory allow him to engage with global networks without losing instructional time with his students. He can be "well-traveled" from the comfort of his classroom.

## Time to lead: Making it work

Particularly for a teacher who's working globally, like Noah, it's a challenge to keep firm roots in your practice, sustain strong relationships with peers and students, and balance work with a young family. And the one thing teachers *never* have enough of is time. So how did Noah do it? Like his counterparts in high-performing nations like Finland and Singapore, Noah held a hybrid role with dedicated time for teaching, collaboration, professional learning, and innovation each day.

Noah found this structure gave him more flexibility to meet day-to-day demands, not just more responsibility. Despite a demanding schedule, he had *more* time to focus without adding hours to already long days.

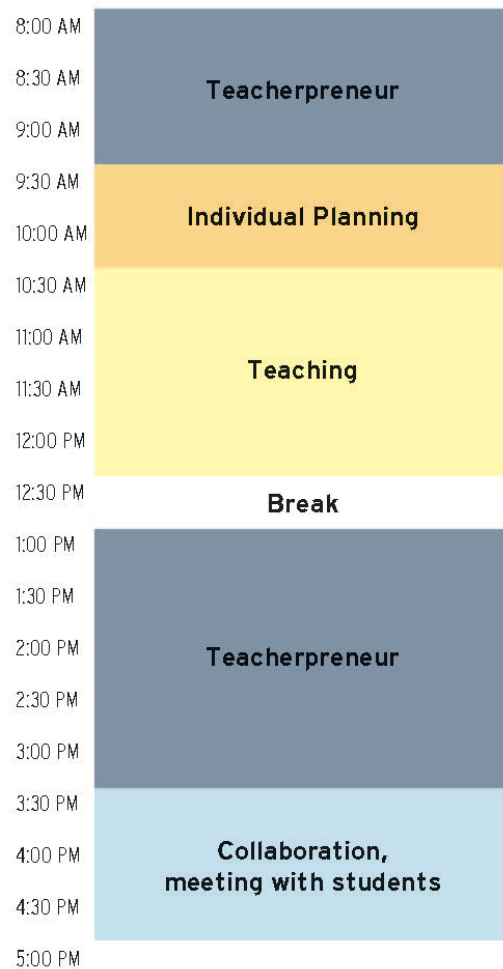
## Spending smarter, not more, in Seattle

Noah's innovative role began in 2011, when CTQ secured a grant allowing us to reimburse the district for half of his contracted time to demonstrate the teacherpreneur concept. By 2013, the district was convinced that Noah's hybrid role was key to deepening its international school program, with input and support from classroom teachers at every step of the way. With the support of Superintendent José Banda, program director Karen Kodama took funds intended to create another central office FTE and instead invested them in covering costs of some of Noah's released time.

## Scaling innovative solutions

Seattle Public Schools has expanded the model to include four new hybrid positions in 2014-15. Like Noah, these teachers draw on their classroom expertise to inform the development of districtwide programs and to collaborate with and support their peers. What started as a teacherpreneurial experiment is now a sustainable solution not just at Chief Sealth, but throughout the district.

## NOAH'S TYPICAL SCHEDULE



### Seattle Public Schools profile

**Location:** Urban, Pacific Northwest

**# teachers:** 3,100 (227 NBCTs)

**# teacherpreneurs:** 12 expected in 2014-15

**# schools:** 95

**# students:** About 51,000

**Demographics:** 120 languages spoken by students, 12% English language learners, 40% eligible for FRL, 56% students of color, 14% receive special education services, 74% graduation rate