

Commission on Educator Leadership and Compensation

Annual Report



2018

State of Iowa
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Introduction

Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) system continues to strengthen the teaching profession and improve classroom instruction, with a significant increase in school districts reporting they met local goals for student achievement in the 2017-18 school year. Iowa has the nation's most extensive teacher leadership system, which taps into the expertise of top teachers to strengthen instruction and raise student achievement.

This report summarizes data from District End-of-Year Reports showing teacher leadership was a factor in student achievement gains, with 56 percent of districts reporting they fully or mostly met their local student achievement goals in the 2017-18 school year. This is up from 50 percent of districts the year before. Student achievement goals are based on multiple measures, such as reading screening assessments and statewide assessments in math, science, and language arts.

The same report showed 89 percent of school districts met local goals for attracting and retaining teachers in the 2017-18 school year, up from 85 percent the year before. Most districts credited the teacher leadership system's salary increases and meaningful leadership opportunities with their success in retaining all or most of their teachers.

This report also highlights a case study, conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), which identified common strategies that led to successful implementation of teacher leadership plans in six Iowa school districts. The strategies included establishing full-time instructional coaches, tailoring professional development to meet the individual needs of schools, and including teachers and other stakeholders in the planning and implementation of teacher leadership plans.

Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation system is the centerpiece of an education reform package proposed by the Branstad-Reynolds administration and adopted by legislators in 2013. The system rewards effective teachers with leadership opportunities, attracts promising teachers with competitive starting salaries, and supports and fosters greater collaboration for all teachers to learn from each other.

The system was phased in over three years. The 2017-18 school year marked the second year involving all Iowa school districts.

More than 25 percent of teachers in all 330 school districts are in leadership roles, such as instructional coaches and mentors. Iowa invests over \$157 million in the system annually.

“Iowa is a trailblazer in teacher leadership, which is about supporting and empowering teachers to do their best work so that students can do their best work. We’ve known for some time that Iowa’s teacher leadership system is elevating the teaching profession, and we’re seeing a positive impact on student achievement as well.”

**~ Iowa Department of Education
Director Ryan Wise**

TLC System Goals

Attract and Retain

Attract able and promising new teachers by offering competitive starting salaries and offering short-term and long-term professional development and leadership opportunities.

Retain effective teachers by providing enhanced career opportunities.

Promote Collaboration

Promote collaboration by developing and supporting opportunities for teachers in schools and school districts statewide to learn from each other.

Reward Professional Growth

Reward professional growth and effective teaching by providing pathways for career opportunities that come with increased leadership responsibilities and involve increased compensation.

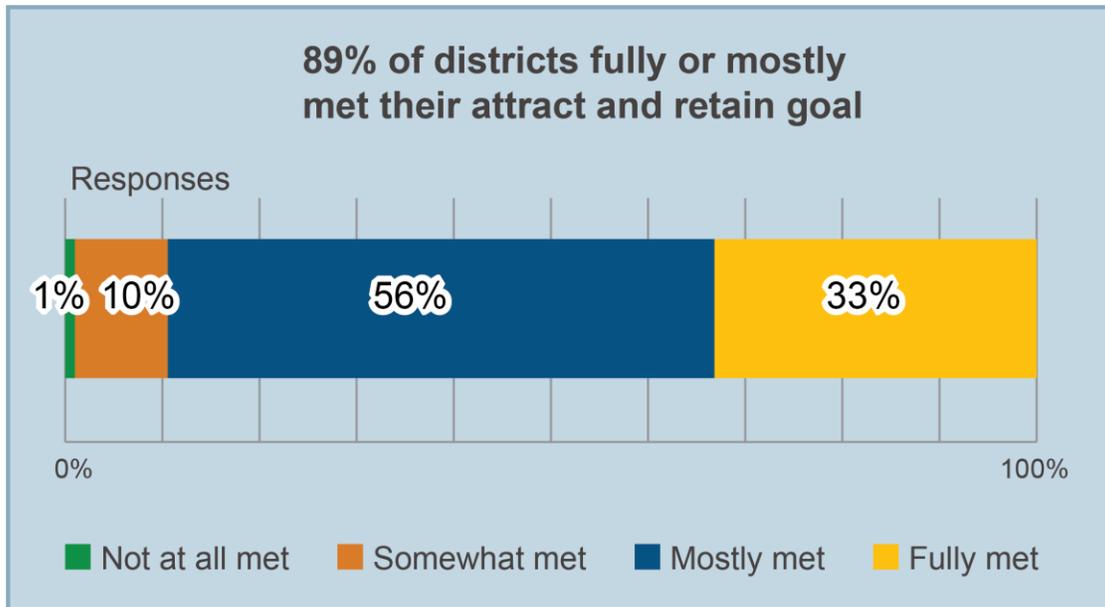
Improve Student Achievement

Improve student achievement by strengthening instruction.

Attract and Retain

Summary

Increased base salaries (up to the new state minimum of \$33,500) and additional opportunities for teachers to have meaningful leadership roles are helping districts attract and retain teachers. Improved mentoring programs provide support to new and career teachers.



In 2016-17, 85% of districts fully or mostly met their local attract and retain goal. 2017-18 showed a 4% gain in this goal area.

State Report Highlights



There are 10,163 teacher leader positions in Iowa, making up 25.24% of the teaching force (source: 2017-18 BEDS Report).



A majority of districts reported retaining all or most of their teachers. Districts shared that TLC influenced this data as a result of increased salaries and meaningful leadership opportunities.



Professional development has become more tightly aligned with school improvement goals and student learning. Districts revealed that staff appreciated the support offered to them through TLC in areas such as data usage, co-planning, co-teaching, and Iowa Core implementation.



In general, the End-of-Year Reports communicated high satisfaction by districts regarding their mentoring and induction programs. TLC has provided mentors with high quality training to support beginning teachers. New teachers received increased support, observation, and coaching on a continual basis.



Districts continued to identify and refine critical, meaningful leadership roles in their districts. The TLC program enabled districts to hire teacher leaders to support their school improvement efforts.

AIR Case Study

Strategies for Implementing the TLC Program in Iowa Districts found the importance of **ESTABLISHING TEACHER LEADERSHIP ROLES**.

Administrators in each of the six districts in the case study described a thoughtful process for establishing TLC. District and school leaders held numerous meetings with stakeholders to design TLC in their district and decide on teacher leadership roles. The meetings spanned a year or more. Respondents emphasized ongoing communication as well as inclusive and distributed decision making about TLC. The following general strategies emerged in multiple districts:

- Select a teacher leadership model with full-time instructional coaches.
- Align TLC with an instructional framework.
- Engage with stakeholders about the local vision for TLC.
- Select teacher leaders in a transparent and inclusive process.
- Learn from other districts' experiences with teacher leadership.

District Spotlights

College Community School District staff: Instructional Coach Linda Leggat, former new teacher Tyler Smith, and Instructional Coach Jennifer Hamos-Miller.



New Teacher Support

In May 2018, all new teachers to the College Community School District were asked to fill out an end of the year survey regarding the teacher leadership system. In this survey:

- 92% of new teachers to the district reported feeling supported by teacher leaders.
- 95% stated that they plan to use teacher leaders as a resource for their continued growth and development.
- 97% believe the supports they have received from the Teacher Leadership system have helped to improve student achievement.
- 92% reported that the Teacher Leadership system of supports has helped them to be successful in meeting the Iowa Teaching Standards.



Waukee 1st grade teachers Melissa Laughery, Sydney Studer, Abby Zaug, Kendall Bradford, and Lindy Dugger look at student data using school pictures instead of names.

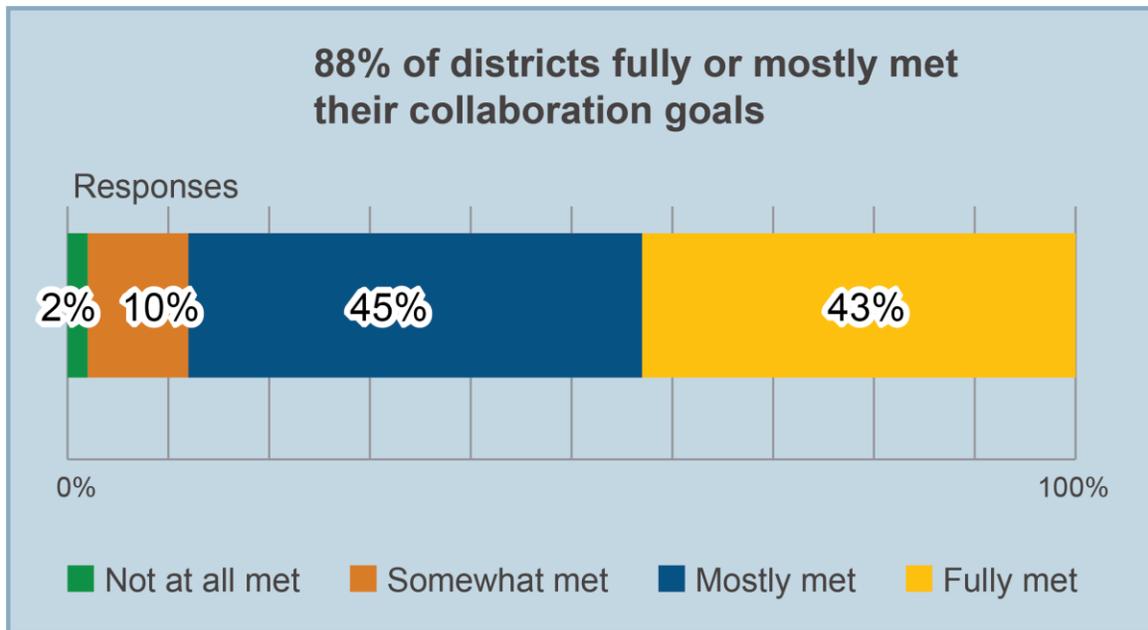
Embedded Professional Learning & PLC+

Waukee Community School District supports all teachers through embedded professional learning. PLC+ is an embedded professional learning experience that is offered throughout all eight elementary buildings and is incorporated as needed at the secondary level. The learning is facilitated by the Instructional Coach within each building and is focused on district and building goals for the year. Each grade level team has three to four half day PLC+ sessions throughout the year. During the 2017-18 school year, PLC+ sessions were designed to elevate learning around foundational skills and word work in literacy.

Promote Collaboration

Summary

As a result of TLC, districts have made collaboration a common practice through initiatives such as peer observations, learning labs, coaching cycles, co-planning and co-teaching, and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as identified in the Iowa Professional Development Model.



In 2016-17, 84% of districts fully or mostly met their local collaboration goal. 2017-18 revealed a 4% gain in this goal area.

State Report Highlights



Teacher participation in full coaching cycles was on the increase and reflected teacher growth. Districts reported that an ongoing cycle of goal-setting, learning, observation and data, and reflection have helped increase achievement and engagement of students by drawing out the best of every teacher.



The activities and outcomes of PLCs improved through TLC leadership roles by providing more structure, support, and increased accountability.

Collaboration had a positive effect on culture and climate in schools. Teachers reported that sharing professionally with each other positively impacted their teaching.



Because of the collaborative nature of peer observations through learning labs, model teacher, and/or structured walkthroughs, teachers have the opportunity to discuss curriculum and instructional strategies.



Collaboration has changed teacher practices across the state.

AIR Case Study

Strategies for Implementing the TLC Program in Iowa Districts found in the case study districts, **PLCS WERE A CORE TLC STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.**

Administrators in five of the six districts reported that prior to TLC, either the districts did not have PLCs or they had PLCs that were “new,” “not functioning as PLCs,” or “undeveloped.” District administrators in only one district reported that they previously had functioning PLCs.

Respondents highlighted the following three strategies for supporting PLCs:

- Schedule weekly PLC sessions.
- Provide dedicated training on PLCs.
- Check in on PLCs as teachers learn new processes.

District Spotlights

Atlantic Middle School math team: Chelsey Lee (6th grade), Katie Chamberlain (Instructional Coach), Hillary Zimmerline (8th grade), and Cory Bartz (7th grade).



Atlantic Community School District reported that most of their teachers worked in curricular teams to map out curriculum and look at assessments used in their classrooms. This work was connected to PLC training that the district sent teachers to the prior summer. In the middle and elementary schools, teachers worked on aligning instruction to standards as well as working on assessments that met those standards to check students' understanding of what was taught. Teachers used teacher leadership coaches to coordinate observations and other instructional or academic supports with other teachers which supported the goal on collaboration. Over 98% of their teachers met the district expectation of using teacher leaders to meet this collaboration effort.

Decorah collaborative teacher, Gabe Twedt, hosted a learning lab on compelling questions and inquiry-based learning in the social studies classroom. Here, Instructional Coach, Andrea Knaack, facilitates the lab's debrief session.



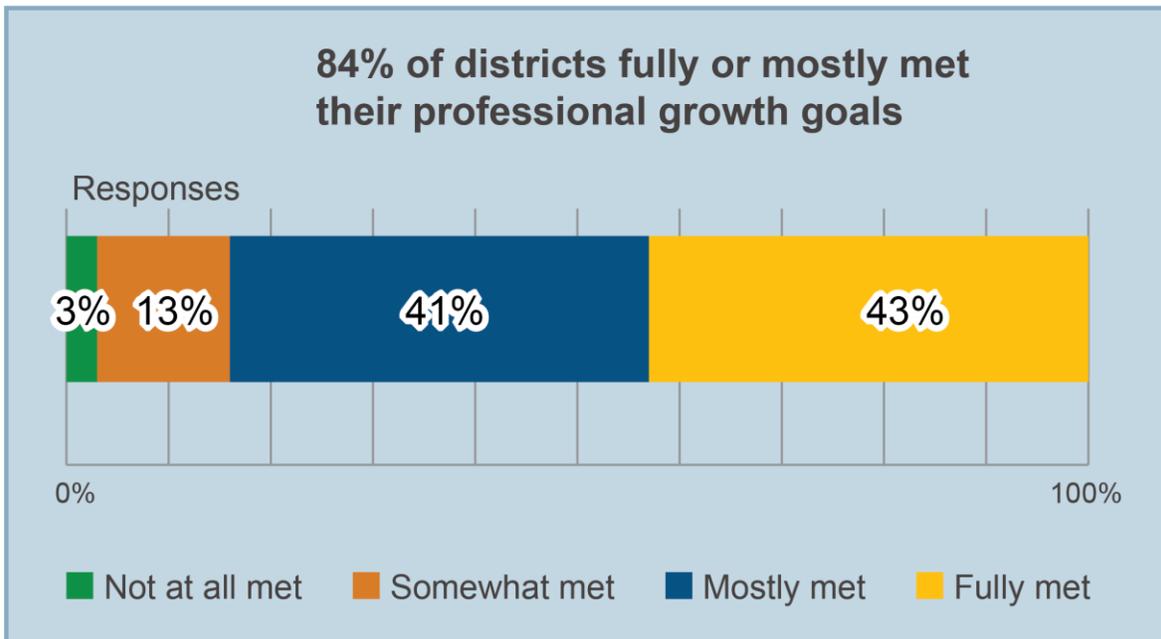
Decorah Community School District shared they have PLCs every Wednesday. Additionally, instructional coach logs indicated that the number of coaching partnerships increased from 76 in 2015-2016, to 98 in 2016-2017, and to 170 during the 2017-2018 school year. This is a 73.5% increase from the past year. As well, coaches worked directly with 25 PLC teams throughout the year. Prior to TLC implementation, the district had only one instructional coach in the area of K-4 literacy.

Peer feedback on the work of the individual coaches continues to be overwhelmingly positive. Learning labs have also been implemented. This year, lab participation totaled 66 attendees amongst nine labs. Throughout the year, 26 participants took part in learning labs within buildings other than the buildings in which they are assigned. Teachers also participated in pineappling events (informal observations), including PLC teams scheduling rotating observations within each other's classroom.

Reward Professional Growth

Summary

TLC offered new pathways for exceptional teachers to share their best practices with colleagues, without necessarily having to leave their own classrooms. Teachers at all levels – both teacher leaders and those who benefit from the teacher leaders' shared expertise – are benefiting from the new roles.



In 2016-17, 83% of districts fully or mostly met their local goal of rewarding professional growth. 2017-18 showed a 1% gain in this goal area.

State Report Highlights



Of the \$157 million allocated in FY18, TLC districts spent more than \$142 million to compensate teacher leaders for their increased responsibilities and additional contract days.



Most districts were able to fill their TLC roles with qualified teacher leaders, and those teacher leaders are returning to their positions.



Teacher leadership roles and responsibilities have been redefined by districts in order to maximize TLC to leverage student achievement goals.



Teacher leaders received professional development to support their district roles.



Professional development has changed for teachers across most districts. TLC has transformed professional development to be more job embedded and responsive to individual teacher needs based on their student data.

AIR Case Study

Strategies for Implementing the TLC Program in Iowa Districts found in case-study districts that **INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES WERE A MAJOR RESOURCE PROVIDED BY TLC.**

Prior to TLC, districts had limited experience with coaches. One of the larger districts had placed coaches in some schools and another of the larger districts had full-time instructional specialists who supported school administrators but did not focus on coaching. When planning their TLC programs, each of the districts was deliberate in establishing coaches and selecting a coaching approach. In the districts utilizing the TAP (The System for Teacher and Student Advancement) educator effectiveness program, coaching focused on TAP instructional rubrics. Each of the other four districts chose a coaching approach (e.g., cognitive coaching, student-centered coaching) from among approaches the district teams learned about from area education agencies (AEAs).

Respondents across districts reported the following strategies to establish and support instructional coaches:

- Help coaches build trust with teachers.
- Provide coaches with formal professional development and informal learning opportunities.
- Provide principals with professional development for working with coaches.
- Use coaching cycles.

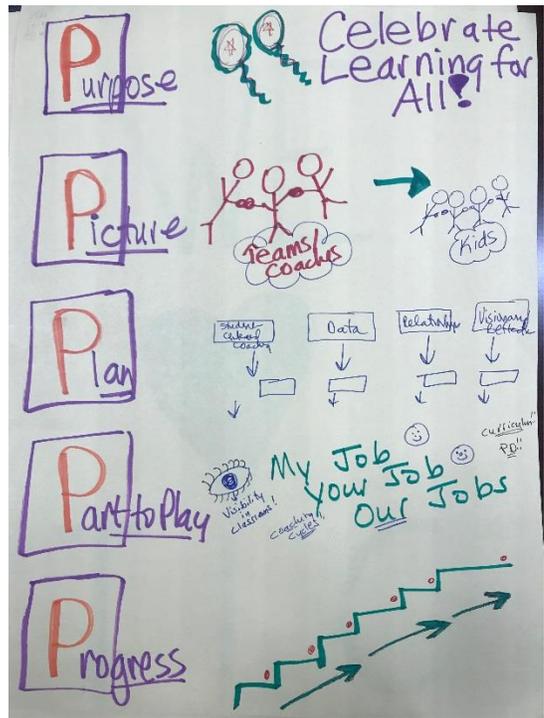
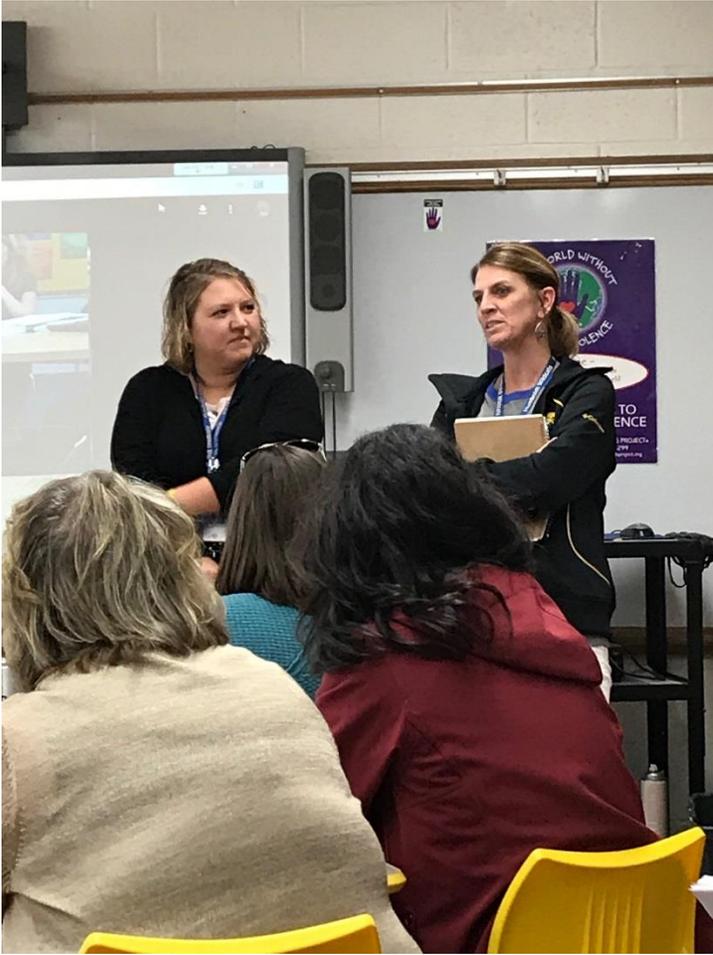
District Spotlights

Scott Berg, an elementary Instructional Coach, works with four special education teachers as part of a hybrid PLC training on-site. Teachers pictured are: Mary Dodson, Wendy Koopman, Cara Kramer, and Amy McGovern from Bettendorf's Mark Twain Elementary.



Bettendorf Community School District shared that they have continued to emphasize the peer review process during the 2017-18 school year. Once again, Instructional Coaches and Curriculum & Professional Development Leaders (CPD) assisted in the process by either being a peer reviewer or by working with groups and/or pairs to support their goals related to the “Characteristics of Effective Instruction.” Instructional coaches met individually with teachers to address areas of focus identified by the teacher. The New Teacher Center Collaborative Assessment Log (CAL) provided feedback and planning focus for the coaching process.

There is continued consensus among all educators that the supports offered through the TLC Model in Bettendorf contribute to improved instruction as well as academic expectations and outcomes for students. Almost 90% of teachers reported that coaches fostered collaboration in their buildings, and 85% reported that coaches facilitated professional learning and the use of research-based strategies to improve instruction.



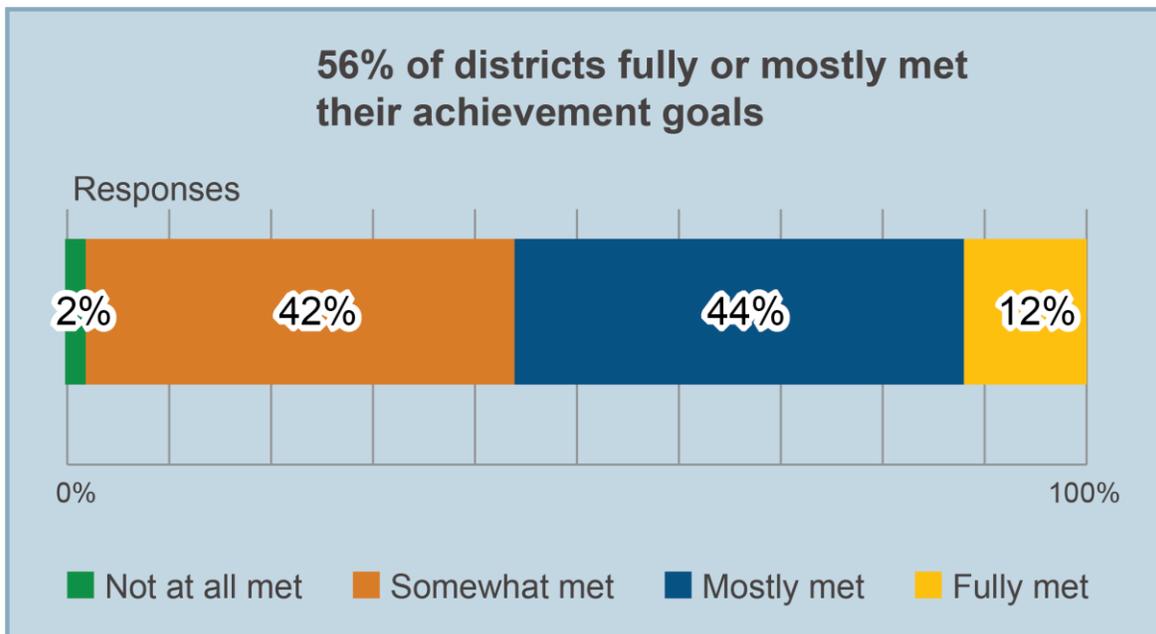
Above: TLC Five Ps
 Left: Student Centered Coaching by Humboldt/Twin Rivers Instructional Coach Andrea Laubenthal

Humboldt and Twin Rivers Community School Districts planned to increase teacher leadership by creating a structure that includes 47 enhanced or new teacher leader roles. The measurement of this is through TLC Support Session Feedback Forms and Teacher-Leader Interaction Logs. Teacher leaders engaged in 551.25 hours of professional growth. Many hours were devoted to assisting staff with instructional practices and data analysis.

Improve Student Achievement

Summary

Districts have reported increases in student achievement, graduation rates, college entrance rates, and other indicators. Most districts reported TLC as one of several factors contributing to student achievement gains, and they were confident there would be a greater tie between the program and student achievement as districts continue to refine the implementation of the TLC system.



In 2016-17, 50% of districts fully or mostly met their local student achievement goals. 2017-18 showed a 6% gain in this goal area.

State Report Highlights



Districts reported a greater connection between teacher leadership and student achievement. They used multiple measures of student achievement to monitor the impact. In addition to Iowa Assessment data, districts also used measurements such as FAST, MAP, BRI, and common formative assessments.



Classroom observations revealed greater student engagement in higher-order thinking tasks.



Districts used TLC resources to align curriculum, instruction, and assessments to Iowa's academic standards.

AIR Case Study

Strategies for Implementing the TLC Program in Iowa Districts found that the case study districts **PRIORITIZED SCHOOLS NEEDS AND DECISION MAKING.**

This allowed the leveraging of Teacher Leadership roles and resources to impact student achievement. A major shift resulting from TLC was decentralizing professional development. Prior to TLC, in the majority of case study districts, the decisions about teacher professional development were made at the district level, or in some cases, by school administrators. Four of the six districts in this study had previously offered professional development only at the district level. Through TLC, school leadership teams became the primary decision makers and schools became the primary sites for teacher professional development. Two strategies emerged from the interviews:

- Use school leadership teams to make decisions about teacher professional development.
- Adapt teacher leader roles to meet school needs.

District Spotlights

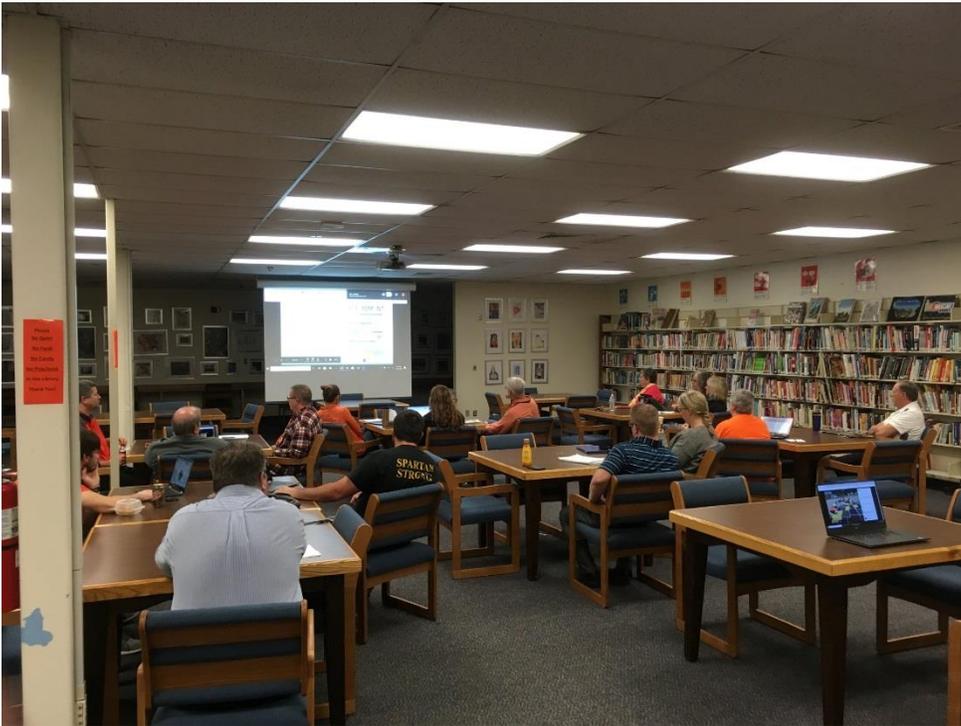
East Marshall's 5th grade PLC team: Mrs. Hamm, Mrs. Scull, and Mrs. Roseland.



At East Marshall Community School District, their highest priority was to increase student achievement. Every year, individual student data is analyzed, looking at each student's typical growth on the Iowa Assessment and NWEA MAP tests, which are directly aligned to the district goals for reading, math, and science. For the 2017-18 school year, East Marshall's goals were to have 78% of students achieve their typical growth on the Iowa Assessment and/or the MAP Assessment in reading. The district reported meeting their goal, with 82% of students achieving typical growth in reading.

The percentage of students in K-6th grades showing growth on their FAST assessments went from 90% in the winter to 96% in the spring.

Teacher feedback and survey data indicated that the staff benefited from professional development. According to the Career Teacher Survey, 92% of teachers reported that through Clusters, PLCs, and professional development, they have enhanced their instructional practices. Further, Master Teacher Self-Survey and Model Teacher Self-Survey showed that 100% of the Master Teachers reported having enhanced their instructional practices through Clusters, PLCs, and professional development.



West Monona staff review IPI data.

West Monona Elementary’s Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI), which is data regarding student engagement during class time, grew from 22.58% of students in levels 5 and 6 in the spring of 2016 to 39% in the spring of 2018. Secondary IPI scores grew from 25.1% in the spring of 2016 to 29.4% in spring 2018. The district also reported that in 2017 they had 55.44% of Pre-K through 5th grade students meeting benchmark using FAST screening in the spring. In 2018, 62% of students met FAST screening benchmarks.

Strengths and Successes

The Commission met four times in 2017-2018 and focused on TLC implementation statewide. The following strengths and successes are from the perspective of the Commission based on their review and reflection on multiple sources of data.

At the State Level

- There is an increase in the continuity of leadership. Administrators and teacher leaders work together in partnership for student learning.
- School districts continue to submit plan changes around the roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders in order to best leverage teacher leadership resources to impact school improvement efforts.
- High performing districts focus on input from varied district stakeholders in the evolution of teacher leadership roles.
- Each state goal is reported being met at higher levels across the state. This shows the need to continue the implementation of TLC programs with fidelity.
- There is a substantial increase in the number of districts meeting student achievement goals due to TLC.

At the District Level

- Increased collaboration has had positive outcomes for school climate, culture, and improving instructional practices.
- Teacher leadership processes have put an increased focus on student learning.
- Districts have a laser focus on finding and implementing the strategies that work for their students.
- Teacher leadership selection processes are inclusive, consistent, and transparent.

At the Teacher Level

- Decentralized professional development, coordinated with teacher leaders, has brought professional development to classroom teachers to better support their individual career development plans.
- Trust between teacher leaders and classroom teachers has increased as they work together to focus on student-centered issues.
- Teachers share that they are less isolated in their work as they collaborate around problems of practice.
- New teachers have targeted support as they begin their careers.

Continuing the Work

Identified by the Commission

- Keep the focus on student achievement.
- Implement a state supported instructional framework and aligned professional development for those districts that would choose to adopt the framework.
- Align TLC practices with the Iowa Professional Development Model in order to support a continuous professional learning mindset among teachers to lead to improved instruction.
- Continue to refine and develop TLC programs as an innovation in school reform. Do not allow the program to stagnate.
- Look at the AIR report findings as positive strategies to be used across the state.
 - Establish teacher leadership roles.
 - Prioritize school needs and decision making.
 - Support the success of instructional coaches.
 - Support professional learning communities.
- Monitor student achievement using multiple sources of data as the new state assessment is administered.
- Clearly define and communicate teacher leadership roles, responsibilities, and expectations to all district stakeholders.
- Share best practices in creating an inclusive and transparent selection process and in considering the length of teacher leadership assignments.
- Explore ways to encourage collaboration across districts.
- Provide support to principals and coaches that will continue to increase collaboration, help them even better understand each other's roles, and use the trust that has been built to move to the next level of work: a focus on teaching and learning.
- Provide support to superintendents in order to support the shift of the principals' changing work.
- TLC is a statewide systemic change effort and is not an "overnight" fix. The State should support this ongoing, capacity-building effort.
- Consider the establishment of Department of Education listening posts around the state to share the characteristics of high performing TLC districts.
- Provide funding and support so that AEAs can contribute to providing training and best practices to districts.

- The Department of Education should continue to monitor districts' data in progress towards state and local TLC goals.
- The State should continue to fund the TLC process statewide in order to improve student learning through the instruction they receive each day. Empower the state's best teachers to lead the effort through TLC.

Commission Members

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