

December 15, 2015



Iowa Department of Education

Commission on Educator Leadership and
Compensation: Annual Report

Iowa Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319

State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
400 E 14th St
Des Moines IA 50319-0146

State Board of Education
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Executive Summary

Division VII of House File 215 established the Commission on Educator Leadership and Compensation (CELC). The Legislature charged the Commission with three primary responsibilities:

- Monitor the implementation of Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation System.
- Evaluate and make recommendations to the Department on school districts' applications for approval of teacher leadership plans and on the expenditure of money appropriated for the development of Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation System.
- Review the use and effectiveness of the funds distributed to school districts for supplemental assistance to high-need schools.

In addition to these primary responsibilities, the Commission is also required to submit its findings and any recommendations for changes to Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation System and the state supplemental assistance to high-need schools program in a report to the Director of the Iowa Department of Education, the State Board of Education, the Governor, and the General Assembly by December 15 annually. The Commission will use this report as an opportunity to share some of the recommendations and findings it has shared with the Department during its meetings.

This report is intended to communicate what the 19 Commission members have heard and observed during the past year regarding TLC - not all items are representative of all districts. Also, this report does not constitute a summative evaluation of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation system. Rather, it is intended to provide one perspective on the current state of TLC. In addition to this report districts submit End of Year reports to the Department of Education (see Appendix 2). Also, the Department of Education has contracted with the American Institutes for Research to conduct an outside evaluation of the TLC system.

Introduction

In the 2014-2015 school year 39 districts from across the state began implementation of Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) plans. In June 2015 districts submitted a report on progress toward locally determined TLC goals. Please see Appendix 2 for a summary of these reports. The Iowa Department of Education's analysis of these reports shows progress is being made. Seventy-seven percent of all district goals were mostly or fully met. Other results include:

- 94% of districts mostly or fully met the goals they set for attracting and retaining teachers.
- 89% of districts mostly or fully met the goals they set for increasing collaboration.
- 95% of districts mostly or fully met the goals they set for rewarding professional growth and effective teaching.
- 66% of districts mostly or fully met the goals they set for improving student achievement.

In August 2015 an additional 76 districts began implementation of TLC plans. As in the first year of implementation, the Commission continues to hear positive feedback from both teachers and administrators.

Strengths of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) System

Commission members shared the following themes related to the positive development of the TLC system over the past year.

- School districts and educators report positive feelings and excitement about TLC and how it is being implemented. It is viewed as an opportunity to increase capacity, trust, and collaboration within schools and districts.
- Teachers and administrators report TLC has generated renewed energy throughout the K-12 system.
- Districts report receiving excellent support from the Department of Education, Area Education Associations, and state professional organizations in the development and implementation of TLC plans.
- Cohort 1 districts say the training, preparation, and relationship building done during their initial year is paying off in the second year.
- Districts appreciate the opportunity to revise TLC plans to ensure they meet on-going local needs.
- Districts in Cohorts 2 and 3 appreciated the earlier notification date as it gave them additional time to plan for implementation.
- The Iowa TLC Administrator Support Program is receiving positive reviews from the principals involved.
- The TLC Online Community (AGORA) provides many resources for districts as they plan and implement TLC.
- Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation System is recognized nationally as a model for other states.
- Students in the first 39 school districts to participate in TLC saw proficiency scores rise on state tests in both reading and math.

Challenges and Concerns

Commission members have also shared challenges they have heard and experienced over the past year.

- Commission members have heard that some TLC positions are being left unfilled or redefined due to lack of qualified applicants.
- Some commission members have heard concerns that all voices are not represented in local TLC evaluation processes.
- As TLC plans are implemented teacher leader roles continue to need clarification.
- Commission members have heard that districts need to continue developing clear processes for how teacher leaders will be evaluated.
- Some Commission members continue to hear concerns that TLC is “taking the best teachers out of the classroom.” While the Commission believes that TLC strengthens instruction by enlarging the impact of great teachers, the perception remains in some places that the best teachers are leaving the classroom.
- Commission members have heard that Teacher Leadership systems are most successful in districts that have established clear connections amongst all district initiatives, including TLC.
- Some districts continue to face challenges with open enrollment, filling teacher leader roles, and finding replacements for teacher leaders who have been released from the classroom.
- Some Commission members have heard that districts need to continue to work on ensuring clear communication and on-going collaboration.
- The Department of Education needs to continue to communicate the purpose of district TLC evaluation and the actions they are undertaking to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the TLC system as a whole, including clear evaluation criteria.
- Commission members report that districts need to ensure they are continuing to develop new leaders over time. The Commission believes that teacher leader positions are not intended to be life appointments and that the development and inclusion of new teacher leaders is essential to success in the long-term.
- Some commission members have heard concerns from districts that need to use a significant portion of TLC funds to raise salaries and therefore have less remaining for other parts of their plan.
- Commission members continue to hear questions related to the sustainability of funding for TLC.

Needs and Recommendations

Commission members also provided suggestions for how they and the State can ensure effective planning and implementation of TLC moving forward.

- Develop a system for gathering research on effective teacher leadership practices and sharing promising practices that are developing across the state. By developing profiles of what successful implementation looks like, districts will better understand the leverage points that are available to them.
- More research needs to be done on the optimal number of years for a teacher to serve in a leadership role. Teacher leader positions were intended to be part of a career lattice and not a career ladder. In the long-term, districts will need support with continuing to train new teachers for leadership positions and on how to effectively cycle teachers in and out of leadership positions.
- The Commission understands and agrees that student achievement must be a part of the overall evaluation of the success of TLC. They also feel it is important to ensure evaluation and accountability includes measures in addition to student achievement. For example, attendance data, behavior data, job satisfaction, and shifts in climate and culture need to be considered.
- The Commission will continue to examine the unintended consequences of some aspects of the law. For example, under current law school counselors with a professional license are not eligible for teacher leadership roles even though they have traditionally served on local leadership teams.
- The Commission has repeatedly heard about the critical role Area Education Associations play in supporting districts with developing and implementing TLC plans. The Commission believes it is essential AEAs continue to receive adequate funding if they are to maintain and increase this capacity as more districts implement TLC plans.

Conclusion

Since beginning their work in August 2013, Commission members have come together to guide the successful development of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation system. The Commission's primary focus has been the development and implementation of a process for evaluating school districts' teacher leadership and compensation plans as well as reviewing and scoring submitted plans. The Commission will begin to shift its focus to the other areas of responsibility given to it by the General Assembly in Division VII of House File 215. In its relatively brief existence, the Commission has come together to fulfill its obligations and to provide input from stakeholders on how this system can help strengthen teaching and learning throughout Iowa.

Appendix 1

Names and Affiliations of Commission Members:

Jeff Anderson	Boone	School Board Member
Lisa Bartusek	Des Moines	Executive Director, IASB
Mike Beranek	West Des Moines	Teacher
Molly Boyle	Waukee	Teacher
Mary Jane Cobb	Des Moines	Executive Director, ISEA
Kevin Ericson	Nevada	Teacher
Ray Feuss	Cedar Rapids	Teacher
Patti Fields	Iowa City	School Board Member
Brenda Garcia	Muscatine	Parent
Paul Gausman	Sioux City	Superintendent
Mary Jo Hainstock	Vinton-Shellsburg	Superintendent
Donna Huston	Twin Cedars	Teacher
Jeff Orvis	Waverly – Shell Rock	Teacher
Diane Pratt	Ft. Dodge	Teacher
Victoria Robinson	Cedar Falls	Professor, UNI
Roark Horn	Clive	Executive Director, SAI
Georgia Van Gundy	Des Moines	Principal Financial
Paula Vincent	Johnston	Chief Administrator, Heartland AEA
Denny Wulf	Norwalk	Superintendent
Ryan Wise (ex-officio)	Des Moines	Iowa Department of Education
Becky Slater (facilitator)	Des Moines	Iowa Department of Education

END-OF-YEAR REPORT SUMMARY 2014-15



November 2015



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Introduction

The Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) system rewards effective teachers with leadership opportunities and higher pay, attracts promising new teachers with competitive starting salaries and more support, and fosters greater collaboration for all teachers to learn from each other.

The overriding philosophy of the system is multi-pronged, but boils down to this: Improving student learning requires improving the instruction they receive each day. There is no better way to do this than to empower our best teachers to lead the effort.

Through the system, teacher leaders take on extra responsibilities, including helping colleagues analyze data and fine tune instructional strategies as well as coaching and co-teaching.

Bipartisan legislation, proposed and signed by Governor Terry Branstad, created a four-year process to fully develop the statewide Teacher Leadership and Compensation System, with the goal of all school districts voluntarily participating by the 2016-17 school year.

The goals of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation system are:

- 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 by developing and supporting opportunities for teachers in schools and school districts statewide to learn from each other.
- 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 by strengthening instruction.

Following the distribution of \$3.5 million in planning grants to all Iowa school districts in Fiscal Year 2014, the Iowa General Assembly approved \$50 million in Fiscal Year 2015. Nearly 150 school districts submitted a local TLC plan and 39 districts were selected by the Commission on Educator Leadership and Compensation. Each of these districts received more than \$308 per pupil to implement their plans.

An additional \$50 million was appropriated for the second year of implementation in Fiscal Year 2016 and 76 more school districts received funding. In Fiscal Year 2017, another \$50 million will be added to the system for a total of \$150 million per year, enabling all districts to voluntarily participate.

As part of the application, each school district was required to provide a description of how the district will determine the impact and effectiveness of the TLC plan, including short-term and long-term measures. This report provides a summary of the data provided in the end-of-year reports submitted by each of the 39 school districts that implemented a local TLC plan during the 2014 – 2015 school year. Each school district's complete end-of-year report is available on the Iowa Department of Education website. In addition, the Iowa Department of Education has contracted with the American Institutes of Research to provide a state-wide report on TLC implementation, which we anticipate will be released in mid-2016.

Executive Summary:

Teacher Leadership and Compensation has five main goals. At their core these goals are:

- Attract new teachers
- Retain effective teachers
- Promote collaboration
- Reward professional growth and effective teaching
- Improve student achievement by strengthening instruction

A review of district end-of-year reports shows that progress is being made toward each of these TLC goals.

- New teachers were more fully supported as they entered the profession and this improved their retention rates.
- The time dedicated to collaboration increased as did the quality of that collaboration.
- The 39 school districts developed a total of 2,297 teacher leadership positions.
- These new teacher leaders received professional development as well as increased responsibilities and compensation.
- Teachers reported being more highly supported and engaged and this increased their retention rates.
- Professional development was improved and implemented with more fidelity and there was increased support and coordination of district initiatives.

School districts feel positive about their initial implementation of TLC. They are excited about the new opportunities and avenues it is opening for teachers and students and believe it has been a successful year.

School districts are reflecting on their implementation and using that information to improve and adapt their local models. This is evident from their end-of-year reports and the changes districts are requesting. TLC will have an impact in the long-term as school districts learn and improve their plans – there are indicators that this is already happening.

The impact on student achievement was less definitive. Some districts saw gains in some areas or with some grade levels. However, they may have had a corresponding drop or lack of change in other areas or grade levels. Many districts prefaced their achievement data with the caveat that they felt it was too early in implementation to truly see an impact on student achievement based on a few key factors.

First, many Cohort 1 districts spent the first semester preparing and training teacher leaders for their new roles. As a result they only began to have an impact in the second semester. Another reason was that many districts implemented other initiatives in recent years (MTSS, FAST, PLCs, IPI, AIW, etc.). This makes it difficult to isolate the impact of TLC on student achievement. However, having teacher leaders dedicated to supporting the implementation of these initiatives likely increased their impact on student achievement. Finally, student achievement data may be impacted by an implementation dip as schools transition to this new system and by the fact that the student population of Cohort 1 does not mirror Iowa's overall student population.

Following is a more complete list of the strengths and next steps reported in districts' end of year reports. Data related to districts' progress toward locally determined goals are also included. Finally, we hear about the impact of TLC from teachers and administrators.

Strengths and Successes:

New Teachers:

- Improved support for initial teachers
- Initial teachers felt mentoring and induction was helpful and effective
- Increased support for mentor teachers

Teacher Leaders:

- Use of teacher leaders increased as the year progressed
- Teacher leaders received quality professional learning – especially instructional coaches
- The majority of teachers leaders are staying in their roles
- Teacher leaders supported teachers with the analysis and use of data
- Teacher leaders supported increased curricular alignment and coherence

Collaboration:

- Teacher leaders are supporting and improving the quality of collaboration
- Increased time for teacher collaboration

Teachers:

- Teachers are more satisfied and engaged in their roles
- Teachers have positive perceptions of TLC
- Teachers feel more highly supported
- Teachers believe TLC has positively impacted their practice
- Early signs of improved teacher retention
- More structures and individuals dedicated to ensuring the professional growth of teachers

Professional Development:

- Improved professional development led by teacher leaders
- Professional development was more relevant, collaborative, engaging, thoughtful, and effective
- Administrators observed more frequent implementation of professional development

District Initiatives:

- Increased support and coordination of local district initiatives
- Increase fidelity of implementation of district Initiatives

Students:

- Increased student engagement
- Improved school family partnerships resulting in increased support for students

Next Steps and Needs:

New Teachers:

- Provide more time for mentors and mentees to meet – especially during the day
- Continue to improve mentoring and induction

Teacher Leadership System:

- More time for teacher leaders to meet *within* districts for collaboration, planning, and learning
- Create internal review committees
- Conduct regional TLC meetings
- Adjust roles to match district needs
- Improve internal data collection to determine the impact of TLC and make adjustments based on this information
- Not all positions were filled and not all districts were at 25% of teachers in leadership roles
 - Some districts continued to hire and make progress on this throughout the year

Administrators:

- Analyze the impact of TLC on administrators
- Provide more support for administrators

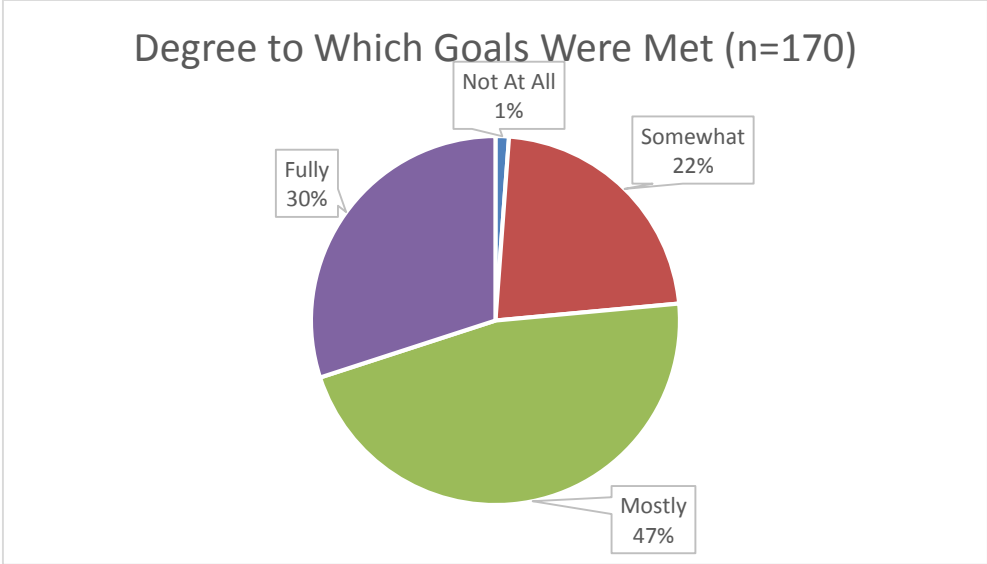
Professional Learning:

- Continue to improve professional learning
- Ensure professional learning is based on data and is differentiated
- Increase professional learning for teacher leaders in **all** roles
- Continue to increase opportunities for, and time dedicated to, collaboration

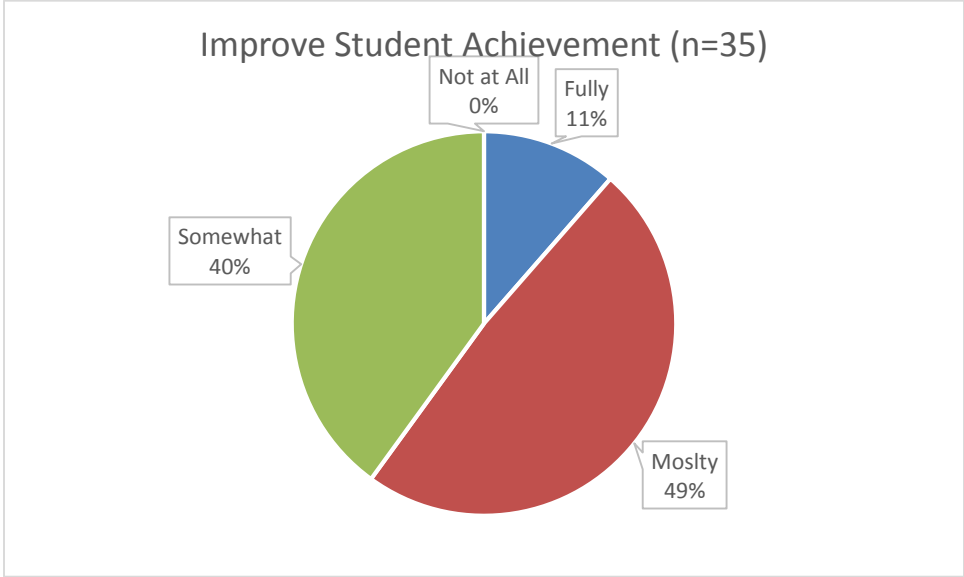
Teacher Leaders:

- Improve the use of model teachers
- Improve oversight and evaluation of teacher leaders
- Continue to expand the use of teacher leaders
- Increase expectations for teacher leaders

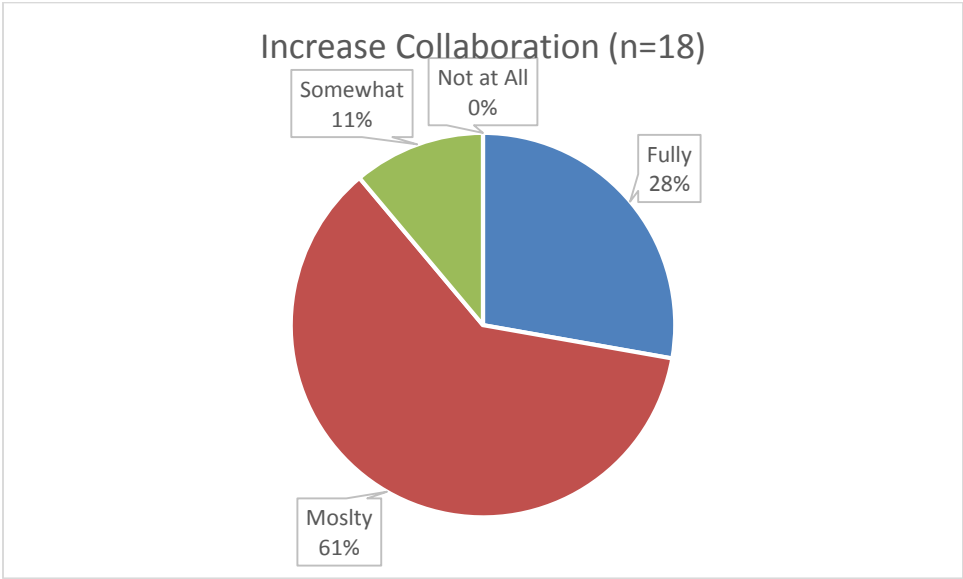
The Numbers:



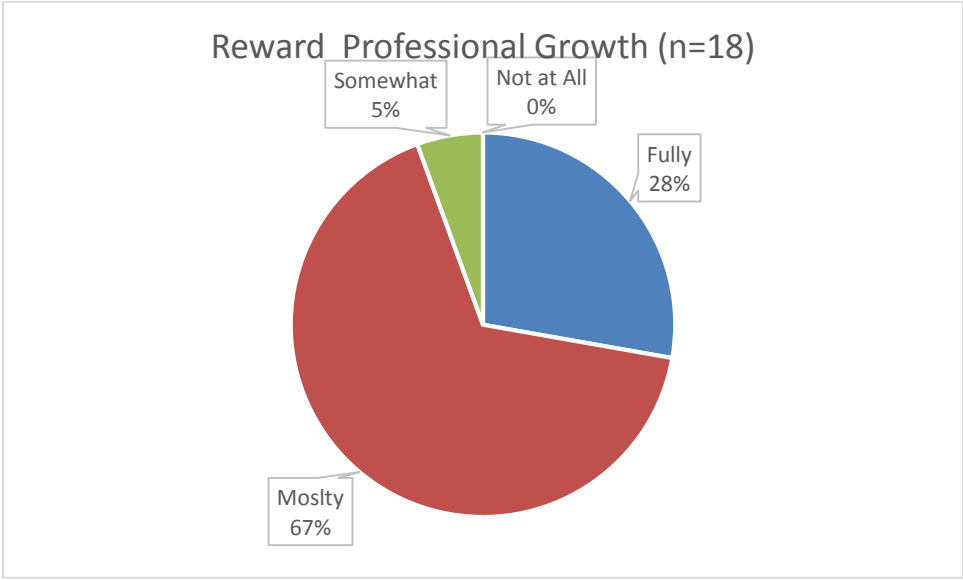
77% of all district goals were *mostly* or *fully* met.



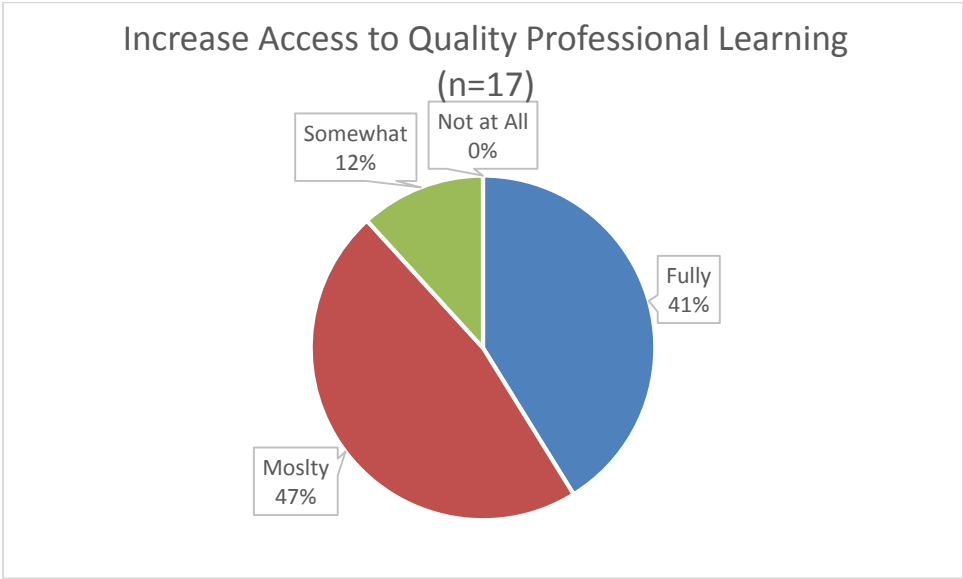
60% of districts *mostly* or *fully* met their goal of improving student achievement.



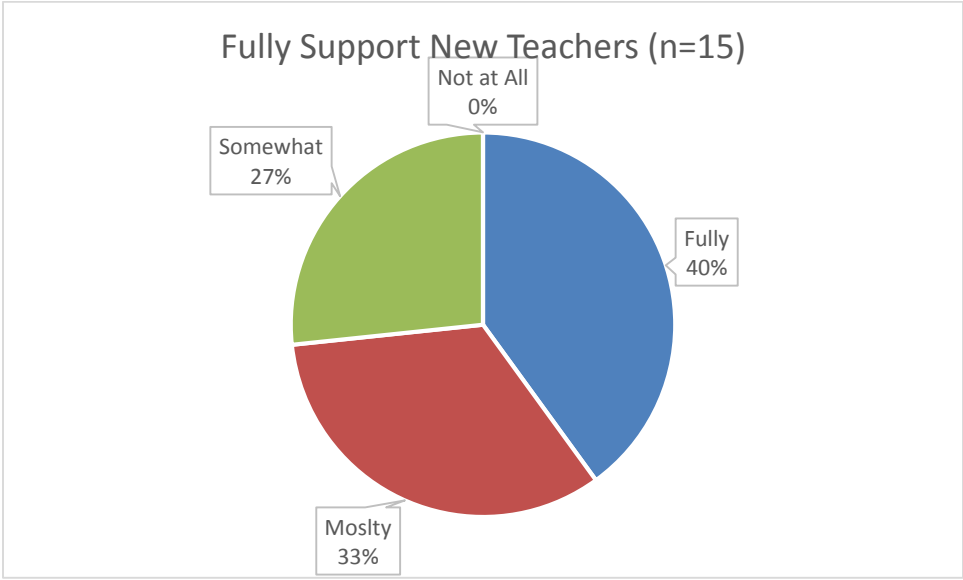
89% of districts *mostly* or *fully* met their goal of increasing collaboration.



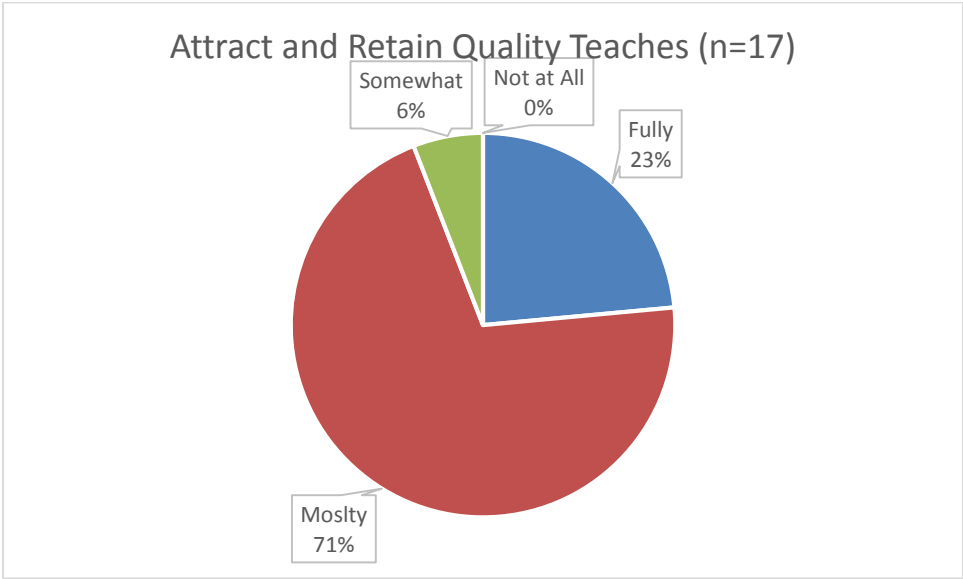
95% of districts *mostly* or *fully* met their goal of rewarding professional growth.



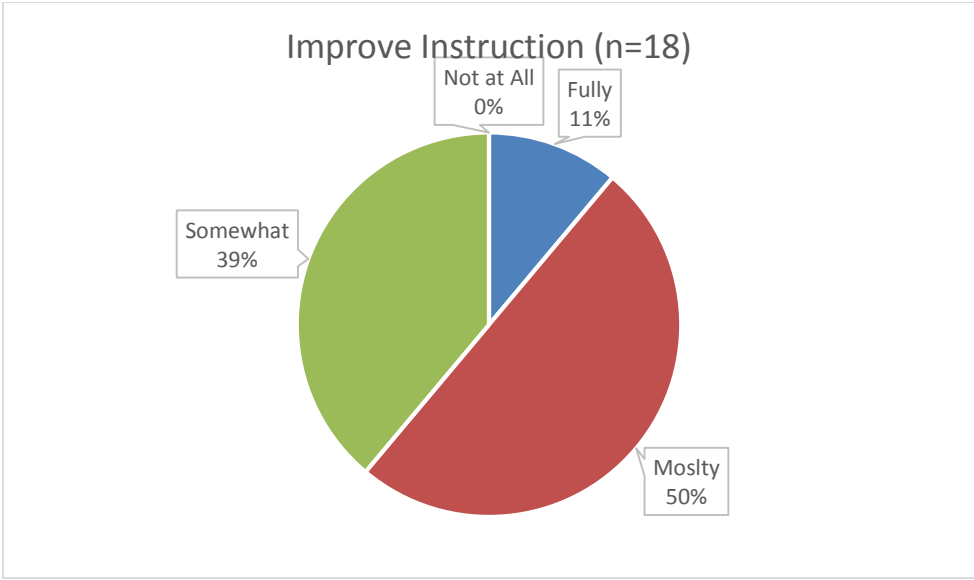
88% of districts *mostly* or *fully* met their goal of increasing access to quality professional learning.



73% of districts *mostly* or *fully* met their goal of more fully supporting new teachers.



94% of districts *mostly* or *fully* met their goal of attracting and retaining quality teachers.



61% of districts *mostly* or *fully* met their goal of improving instruction.

The Stories:

The positions of instructional coach and curriculum leader have been instrumental in our system this year. We have just completed our year end curriculum meetings and I am amazed by how far we have come in our knowledge of both the Core Curriculum and the value of being aligned in our high level expectations for students. The leadership ability of these teacher leaders has deepened content level discussions and analysis of pedagogy. It has gone from a discussion of theory to the coaching of practice with valuable feedback.

-Pella

Instructional coaches have been instrumental in reinforcing the guaranteed and viable curriculum.

-Muscatine

Every teacher utilized our coaches. Our professional development was greatly enhanced as a result of TLC. We were able to offer individualized professional development days and we had two of our own in-house mini-conferences called Rocket University (we are the Rockets). Staff feedback on professional development was overwhelmingly positive.

-Rock Valley

Instructional leaders worked directly with staff to implement professional learning based on the student learning data in each individual building.

-Johnston

The fact that we have met all our APR goals and have had 100% participation from teachers in our first year is evidence that TLC has had a positive impact on our district, but most importantly on students.

-Gilbert

A high school teacher thought that going to see a model teacher outside her building would be a waste of time. After she visited an elementary classroom, she worked with her coach to implement a "stations" environment in her high school classroom that now allows for her to individually confer with students on a more regular basis while also allowing practice time with meaningful work for students.

-Green County

I really loved working with my instructional coach – not only does she give me feedback on my teaching, but she helps me grow positively as a teacher.

-Western Dubuque

Over 40% of our staff is involved in teacher leadership activities and trainings.

-Saydel

The goals that we established in our Strategic plan are accomplished through the work of the teacher leaders and administrators. The work happens at a deeper and faster level than in the past.

-Sioux City

TLS has quickly become an integral part of the Ottumwa Schools for providing additional layers of support for teachers, administrators, and students.

-Ottumwa

The district is truly at a place where we often wonder how we did anything without this layer of leadership, how people rose to levels of leadership, or how we got anything done in terms of continuous improvement. These people are just absolutely critical to moving our organization forward.

Surveys show staff feels professional development has become more engaging, thoughtful, and effective.

-Southeast Polk

She (coach) is welcome in my classroom any day! Her attitude is always positive and supportive and makes me feel as though she really cares. She has confidence in her knowledge of AIW and how to support teachers through the process.

The reflection time I enjoyed the most because I was allowed time to talk with teachers and to reflect over what I was doing well in my teaching capabilities and what I could do better.

-Humboldt

Elementary Teacher: Cluster classes have been more powerful than I ever imagined they would be this year. Each week we focused on a different domain and studied in depth how to become an exemplary teacher in each area.

High School Teacher: I am so grateful for the cluster I was assigned to and gained respect and understanding for all the teachers in my TAP class. I see so much growth in myself, informally and formally on the observations in my classes by my peers.

Elementary Teacher: ...the conversations we now have as teachers is awesome. Everyone is thinking more about their teaching and trying to find ways to improve what we are doing. By working together we can come up with some great ways to improve student learning in our district.

High School Teacher: Because of its direct and frequent interactions, hands on activities, and more intimate learning environment, I have gained most of my professional growth from weekly TAP classes.

-North Polk

The teacher leaders have made a bridge between administration and teachers to involve more people and get more input into district decisions.

-Van Meter

This work over the last year has moved up further in the implementation of our instructional model as well as the Comprehensive Literacy Model. Without a doubt, it is the impact on the implementation of professional learning for teachers that will ultimately impact student learning.

-Marshalltown

[The coaches] have played an integral part in my decision to break out of my old instructional methods and seek new ways of improving my curriculum. Thank you to them!!!

The biggest thing is to have someone to have meaningful conversations with about any of the aspects of instruction and life in the classroom. It is necessary for her to be in my room when needed for this, but sometimes just the conversations between 2 teachers focusing their thoughts and ideas on a single issue that has become important is so very helpful.

Whenever I try something different, I usually consult my coach to get some input before starting. Sometimes it helps to reassure me about what I plan to do; other times it allows me a chance to get fresh eyes on a problem and adjust accordingly.

-Roland-Story

Teacher leaders work side by side with groups of teachers taking what they learned through professional development and embedding it in their classroom to improve student learning. Administrators report working with teacher leaders has helped professional development be more intentional, connected, and differentiated for teachers. Additionally they are seeing evidence of the professional learning being applied in the classroom.

-West Des Moines

Through many coaching and planning sessions the two teachers quickly adjusted their practices and developed a highly performing co-teaching relationship. This resulted in improved student achievement scores on the Iowa Assessments. In fact, almost all special education students in that classroom made either expected growth and/or were proficient.

-Winterset

The TLC Program has brought additional supports to our new teachers and has also brought an increased energy to our more experienced teachers, as everyone feels like they have a "partner" to help, as needed in the classroom and they don't have to be so isolated, since they do not have grade-level partners in our building. We have nothing but "good" to say about the TLC Program and are so grateful that we were able to implement the program this first year!

100% of teachers felt they were "highly supported" during the school year and were "highly satisfied" with the TLC program.

-Delwood

At the beginning of the year, I felt lost and intimidated. Now, however, after asking for help and receiving helpful feedback, I feel a lot more comfortable going to _____ faster with questions. I feel more supported since she has spent time in my classroom, sees me work, and my specific students' work. I really appreciate that she values the work I'm putting in and that she helps me with strategies to support all my kiddos. I wish I had gone to data and to her sooner with my questions in the beginning of the year when the intervention first started.

The resident mentor has been a great experience for a first year teacher. Being able to plan lessons and run ideas by _____ has been so helpful while learning the ins and outs of the school and of the teaching profession. She is always challenging me to be a better educator and help my students grow in my subject matter. Anytime I feel overwhelmed with the stress of being a first year teacher, she is able to walk me through processes and ways to improve my teaching ability.

-Dubuque

Principals can no longer imagine a functioning building without teacher leaders.

A first year teacher said that college underprepared her to enter the teaching profession and that she relied heavily on her mentor for support in many areas. She shared that without having her mentor in her building, she probably would have quit teaching.

A career PE teacher worked with lead teachers to gain release time to visit model PE teachers in other buildings, and had a lead teacher come to her class and co-teach with her. She gained new perspective from the experience and saw how small changes to her instruction positively impact the students in her classes.

-Davenport