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Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation System

2015-2016

End of Year Report Summary

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INTRODUCTION

Iowa's 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, assisting in fine-tuning instructional strategies, coaching, and co-teaching.

Bipartisan legislation, proposed and signed by Governor Terry Branstad, created a four-year process to fully develop the statewide TLC system.

The goals of the TLC 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 was added to the system for a total of \$150 million per year, enabling all Iowa school 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 115 school districts that implemented a local TLC plan during the 2015 – 2016 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 statewide report on TLC implementation, which we anticipate will be released in early 2017.

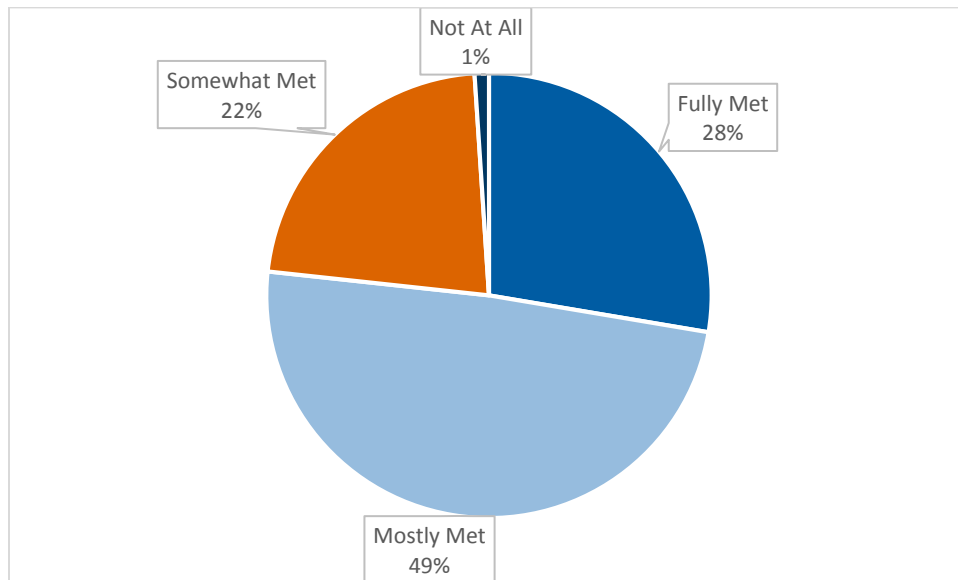
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TLC 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

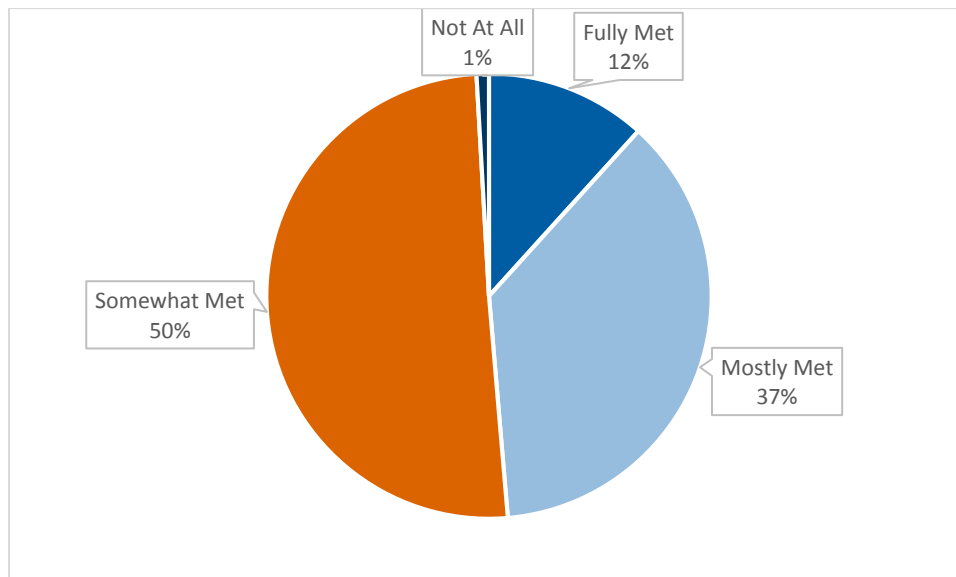
A review of district end-of-year reports shows that progress is being made toward each of these TLC goals.

- New teachers were provided with increased supports.
- The majority of districts reported stable or increasing retention rates for teachers and teacher leaders.
- Teachers reported that TLC increased the opportunity for quality collaboration.
- Districts were able to provide pathways to new career opportunities for teachers.
- Teacher leaders were provided with multiple opportunities for professional development.
- The opportunities for teacher professional development were increased, improved, and individualized.



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

The impact of TLC on student achievement was less definitive. Some districts saw gains, some remained stable, and others saw slight decreases.



49% of districts *mostly* or *fully* met their goal of improving student achievement.

Many districts are reluctant to make a judgement about the impact of TLC on student achievement at this time. They cite a number of factors:

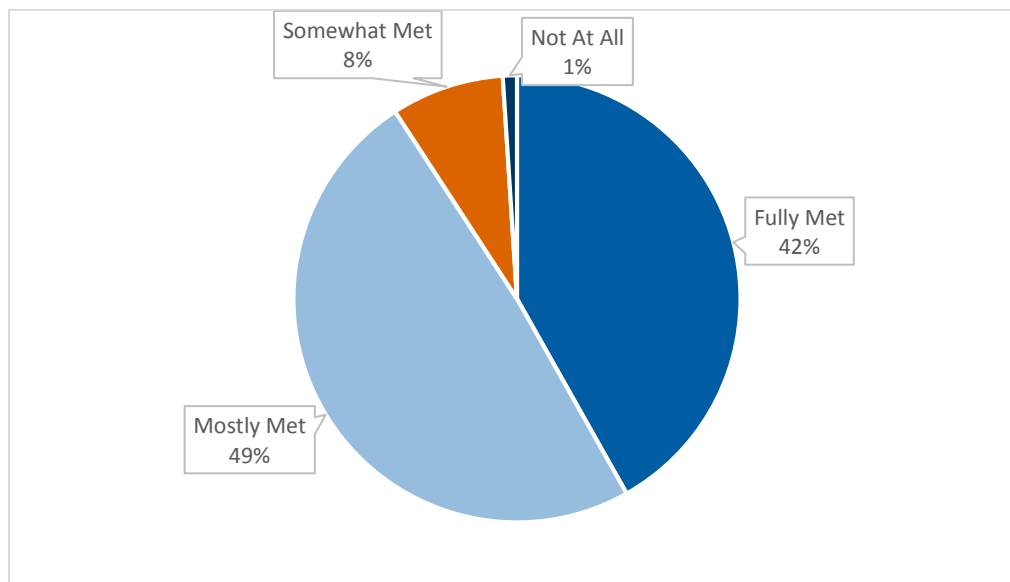
First, districts need time to train teacher leaders and to allow them to develop expertise in their new roles. Second, for teacher leaders to be successful they need time to develop trusting relationships with teachers. Third, it is difficult to tease out to what extent impacts are a result of TLC and to what extent they are the result of other school improvement initiatives. Finally, districts understand that “*all* successful schools experience an ‘implementation dip’ as they move forward.” [emphasis in the original]¹

Overall, districts feel positively about their implementation of TLC and the opportunities provided for teacher leaders, teachers, and students. As evidenced by TLC end-of-year reports and change requests, districts are continuing to use lessons learned during implementation to improve their teacher leadership system. They are reflecting on their strengths and next steps, evaluating the impact and effectiveness of their system, and making adjustments to ensure continuous improvement.

The remainder of this report is dedicated to sharing data on district progress toward locally determined TLC goals and examples of strengths and next steps reported by districts. Finally, we conclude the report by hearing about the impact of TLC from teachers and administrators.

¹ Fullan, Michael. Leading in a Culture of Change. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

ATTRACT AND RETAIN TEACHERS



91% of districts *mostly* or *fully* met their goal of attracting and retaining teachers.

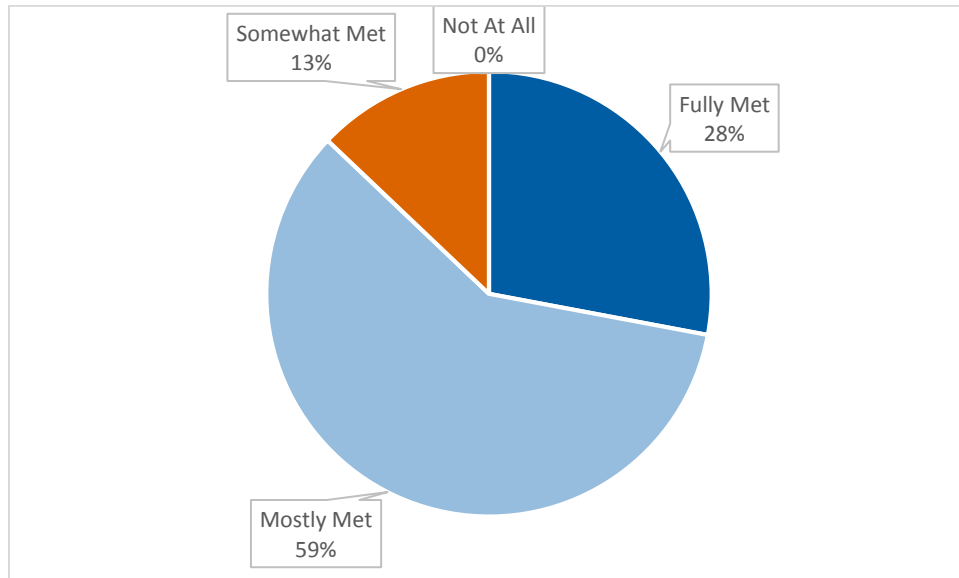
EXAMPLES OF STRENGTHS AND SUCCESSES

- New teachers were largely satisfied with the training and support they received.
- Districts raised teachers to the \$33,500 minimum starting salary.
- Some districts developed in-house mentoring and induction programs.
- Beginning teachers' collaboration with their mentors had an impact on student learning.
- Mentors and mentees were given increased time to meet and conduct observations.
- Retention rates for teachers and teacher leaders were stable or increasing.
- Districts provided new, meaningful leadership opportunities for teachers.
- High rates of interaction between teachers and teacher leaders.
- Mentors were seen as skillful, supportive, and knowledgeable.

EXAMPLES OF NEEDS AND NEXT STEPS

- Increase time available for new teachers to collaborate with teacher leaders.
- Provide increased supports for new teachers as they develop their portfolios.
- Provide mentors in the same department or building as new teachers.
- Continue to develop and refine the roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders.
- Develop the Model Teacher role more fully.

PROMOTE COLLABORATION



87% of districts *mostly* or *fully* met their goal of promoting collaboration.

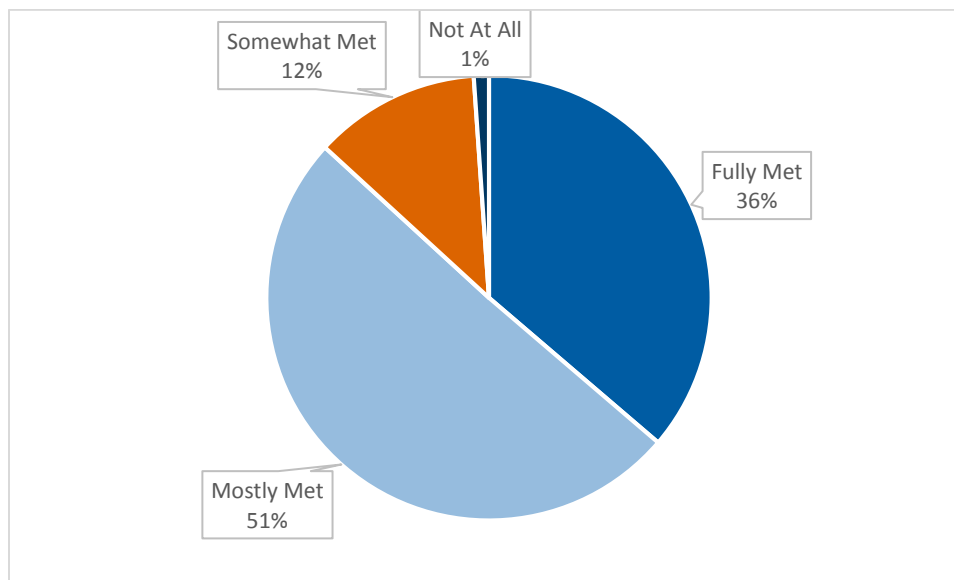
EXAMPLES OF STRENGTHS AND SUCCESSES

- Teachers are members of professional learning communities or collaborative learning teams.
- Collaboration time was provided on a weekly basis.
- Teachers were largely satisfied with the time available for collaboration.
- Teachers and teacher leaders participated in regional and statewide professional learning opportunities.
- Visits to Model Teacher classrooms increased.
- Teachers report TLC supports collaboration in their district.
- The number of peer observations increased.
- Districts increased effective implementation of professional learning communities.

EXAMPLES OF NEEDS AND NEXT STEPS

- Scheduling time for professional learning communities to meet, especially at the secondary level, proved difficult.
- Continue to strengthen district professional learning communities.
- Ensure all teachers have opportunities to participate on a collaborative teams.
- Continue to increase the number of teachers accessing instructional coaches.

REWARD PROFESSIONAL GROWTH



87% of districts *mostly* or *fully* met their goal of rewarding professional growth.

EXAMPLES OF STRENGTHS AND SUCCESSES

- Districts were able to provide new, meaningful leadership opportunities for teachers.
- Teacher leaders were provided training and support to ensure success in their new roles.
- A number of districts exceeded the goal of 25% of teachers in leadership roles.
- Many districts had more applicants for positions than positions available.
- Teachers were very satisfied with the opportunities for career advancement.
- Many districts were able to increase the number of teacher leadership roles available.
- Districts provided opportunities for teacher leaders to collaborate.
- The development of a mentoring program to support teachers taking on leadership roles.

EXAMPLES OF NEEDS AND NEXT STEPS

- Provide ongoing, clear communication about teacher leader roles, responsibilities, and supports.
- Not every district was able to achieve the goal of 25% of teachers in leadership roles.
- Continue to educate teachers on what teacher leadership is and what it can be.
- Ensure that the responsibilities of positions align with additional compensation and extra days.
- Increase clarity of the model teacher role and provide additional training and support for this role.

DISTRICT VOICES

“Typically the first question I get as a program coordinator of our teacher leadership system is how do we know it’s making a difference? I respond with the question: If our TLS were no longer in place for next year would it be missed? 100% of the time teachers and administrators have said yes we wouldn’t be able to do what we are doing now without it.”

Pleasant Valley

“Our TLC PD leader is a great resource for me as a principal when designing and implementing effective and meaningful professional development for my staff.”

“The opportunity to observe other teachers is a great benefit. It shows me how other teachers are using different strategies in their classrooms both for academic purposes and classroom management.”

Marshalltown

“The TLC program has built a tremendous amount of capacity in our district to support high levels of learning for our students. TLC leaders have helped to increase the feelings of collective efficacy among staff. Further, TLC leaders have transitioned into district and building leadership roles, creating a sustainable system for continuous improvement.”

Urbandale

“The biggest thing is to have someone to have meaningful conversations with about any of the aspects of instruction and life in the classroom.”

Roland Story

“After having (BLANK) as a coach, I cannot imagine not having that help! Adding instructional coaches is the best thing West Delaware has done to improve learning for all (teachers and students)!”

West Delaware

“The culture of developing teacher leaders is beneficial and encourages increased ownership of district and building level initiatives. I now have the ability to put PD into practice on a daily basis due to the collaboration of TLC.”

Norwalk

“In all truth, it is hard to remember how we did anything without teacher leaders. The influence of teacher leaders cannot be underestimated. We get better all the time because our teacher leaders have taken the challenge to do more, to do better, and to help one another grow.”

Southeast Polk

“I would not be half the teacher I am today without out instructional coaches. I have learned about how to implement high impact strategies in my classroom on a daily basis and it is having a positive impact on my students.”

“I always felt as a veteran teacher I didn't need any help - especially from an instructional coach because they would probably just judge/evaluate me; however, after working with the coaches, that negative first thought was blown to smithereens! They always made sure that I had the power to say no, but their suggestions were fantastic and often incorporated ideas/concepts that were important but overlooked by me. The collaboration is between colleagues- not at all evaluative. By far and away, having instructional coaches have made me into a better teacher.”

Western Dubuque

“_____ is always available and ready to assist in any way possible. She challenges me to push beyond my comfort zone and instills me with confidence. I value her opinion and know that she is extremely knowledgeable in the areas of reading and writing. She cares about all students and is willing to go the extra mile to make sure all students learn. _____ is a valuable leader in our school and district.”

North Scott

“Being able to observe _____ gave me the opportunity to learn from her many years of experience. She was able to give me constructive feedback about how best to teach a skill, and together, we were able to check progress of struggling students much more effectively.”

“The feeling I got when working with TLC was one of mutual respect and genuine helpfulness. It felt collaborative and never evaluative.”

Union

“I feel that cluster meetings and collaborating with those teachers has really helped to strengthen my teaching in the classroom. Discussing ideas and strategies and then being able to go back to my classroom and integrate them into my teaching has made my classroom more effective this year. I have utilized the Master teacher often and she has helped me seek out additional resources when needed.”

North Polk

“Thank you [instructional coach] for your amazing support! You were an advocate for kids first and foremost, and improving us as teachers to directly impact the students. So many great resources, so much time committed - awesome!”

Solon

“I know that for myself, having the option of working with a coach (a very knowledgeable and great person to work with), has made it make me want to stick around longer because I know my teaching will improve the more I work with her.”

“The support for our new teachers is not something I have ever experienced before. The mentors and the coaching support is a gift to our new staff members. We have a new teacher, who came to us with multiple years of experience. At the beginning of the year she felt lost, and overwhelmed. Recently this teacher shared how much she had learned about teaching and learning. This teachers gives credit to the coaches for her growth as a teacher.”

Winterset

“Based on survey information from our teachers collected at the end of the 2015-16 school year they felt more supported than ever to reach their students with the work they did with the building instructional coaches. We have really honed in on the right work and both teachers and students are thriving because of it.”

Vinton-Shellsburg

“This year has been amazing and challenging. Through my work with my mentor and instructional coach, I was able to identify and prioritize my responsibilities and goals to ensure a strong start to my school year and continued career in Waukee. I’d like to thank the district for giving me an opportunity to have a mentor and instructional coach to guide me through my first year.”

Waukee

“Planning and co-teaching a unit was such a powerful learning experience! It was great to have [a coach] to bounce ideas off and having her teach as well let me watch my class as they learned. I could see better who was struggling and I got to see a great teacher in action.”

Waverly-Shell Rock

“Having the TLC Leadership Team comprised of 7 teachers has not only given teachers’ leadership roles and responsibilities but leadership responsibilities/roles have now been dispersed among several people. PLCs have become more effective now that the three PD leaders better meet the needs of its PLCs and model teachers have received feedback that has been beneficial to the model teachers as well as the teacher observer.”

Tri-County

“Teachers are making constant requests for support from teacher leaders which demonstrates the culture of learning here at NFV. We are receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback from teachers participating. Teacher Leadership has been highly received and appreciated at NFV.”

North Fayette Valley