

Teacher Leadership and
Compensation System

2017-18

Statewide End of Year

Report Summary



Published
Fall 2018

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

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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 Iowa's best teachers to lead the effort.

Through the system, teacher leaders take on additional responsibilities, including helping colleagues analyze data, assisting in fine-tuning instructional strategies, coaching, and co-teaching.

Bipartisan legislation, proposed and signed by former Governor Terry Branstad in 2013, created a four-year process to fully develop the statewide TLC system.

The goals of the TLC system are to:

- Attract able and promising new teachers by offering competitive starting salaries as well as 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.

The 2017-18 school year marked the second year that every district in the state fully implemented TLC. The state allocated \$157,409,825 in fiscal year 2018 to support districts in their TLC implementation efforts. Every district received \$323.27 per pupil to implement their plans.

Each district is required to keep an updated TLC plan on file with the Iowa Department of Education (the Department). Districts' original plans and approved changes can be found on the [TLC page of the Department website](#). Since 2014, when the first cohort of districts began the TLC process, the Department has approved over 1,000 plan changes. Districts continually reflect on their progress toward the vision and goals of their TLC plans. This process helps districts make changes to ensure that they leverage TLC to influence their school improvement process.

As part of the plan, each district is required to provide a description of how it will determine the impact and effectiveness of TLC, including short-term and long-term measures. This report summarizes the data provided in the end-of-year reports submitted by all 333 school districts during the 2017-18 school year. Each district's complete, end-of-year report is available on the Department's website.

Overall Findings

Many districts in Iowa collected data from district-created surveys that showed teacher leader roles positively impact classroom instruction as well as support professional learning needs. In general, the following themes were shared:

- The percentage of school districts that fully or mostly met their student achievement goals grew to 56 percent in the 2017-18 school year, up from 50 percent the year before.
- A majority of school districts credited TLC's salary increases and meaningful leadership opportunities with their success in retaining all or most of their teachers.
- Teachers felt that classroom instruction improved as a result of working with instructional coaches/teacher leaders.
- Teachers felt that classroom instruction was enhanced as a result of meaningful and differentiated professional learning opportunities facilitated by TLC leadership teams.
- Teachers felt that release time positively impacted their instructional practice.
- Teachers felt that their mentors helped them shape their practice.

Additional observations indicated that coaching has become more targeted based on building and district needs. Themes from district reports indicated that districts were more intentional and sophisticated in their planning for the roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders. This intentional planning resulted in districts making changes to their TLC plans to reflect school improvement needs. Teacher leaders' responsibilities included:

- Curriculum and standards areas such as literacy, math, science and social studies and writing
- Student services such as special education, social and emotional learning, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, English Language Learners, at-risk, and talented and gifted
- School improvement efforts such as Multi-Tiered System of Supports, equity, college and career readiness, and technology integration

Many districts reported the adoption of an instructional framework to improve core instruction and provide a common language for coaching and understanding of what quality instruction looks like.

Reports reiterated the importance of both district and building leadership teams engaging in collaborative conversations to examine the overall TLC system. The discussion topics included:

- Vision of the TLC program and clear communication of that vision to all stakeholders
- Redefining roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders and a system to share those responsibilities and expectations with all staff
- Common understanding and implementation among all administrators across districts
- Professional development and implementation of effective practices that impact student achievement

Attract and Retain

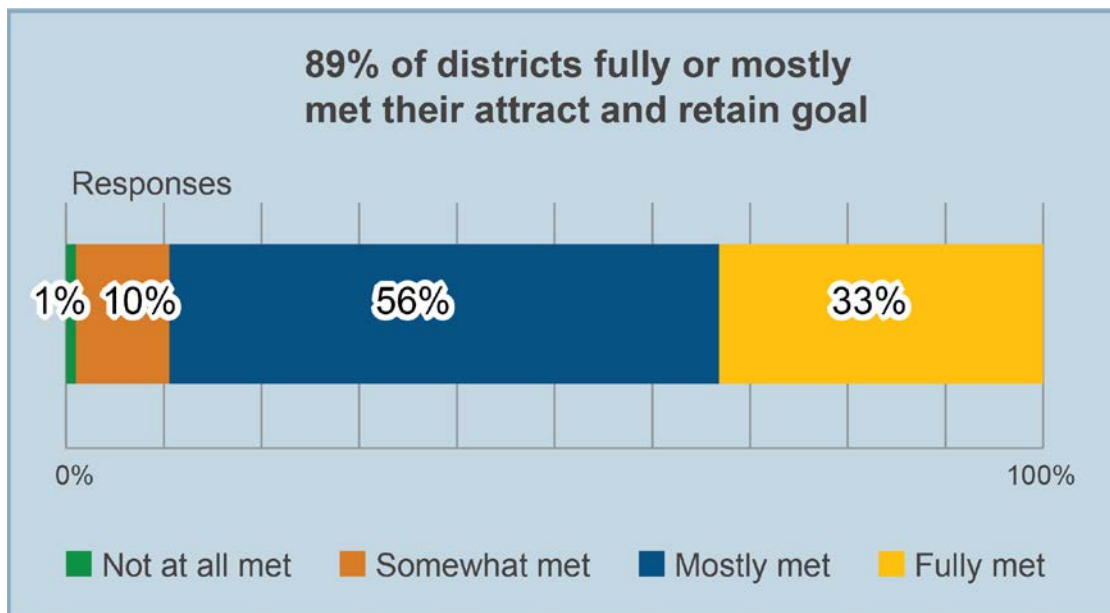
Goals

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.

Summary

Through larger base salaries and additional opportunities for teachers to have meaningful leadership roles, districts are attracting and retaining 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.

Key Findings

- 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. *Odebolt-Arthur Community School District (CSD) leaders stated that the TLC program provided the district with resources to supplement teacher salaries and provide professional development that aligns with their district goals.*
- 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 implementation of statewide academic standards. *Waukee CSD leaders shared that professional learning was an embedded experience offered throughout all buildings, facilitated by instructional coaches.*

- 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. *Keokuk CSD leaders stated that, through the TLC program, they were able to create a truly robust mentoring program with a triad of support, including a TLC peer mentor, TLC instructional coach, and TLC Iowa Core strategist.*
- 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. *Cedar Rapids CSD leaders reported that they formulated clear, transparent job descriptions for all TLC positions and invited all eligible teachers to engage in the rigorous hiring process. They re-purposed all TLC positions to align with the support needed to achieve goals, including the reduction of district positions, an increase in school-based positions, and addition of full-time curriculum facilitators.*

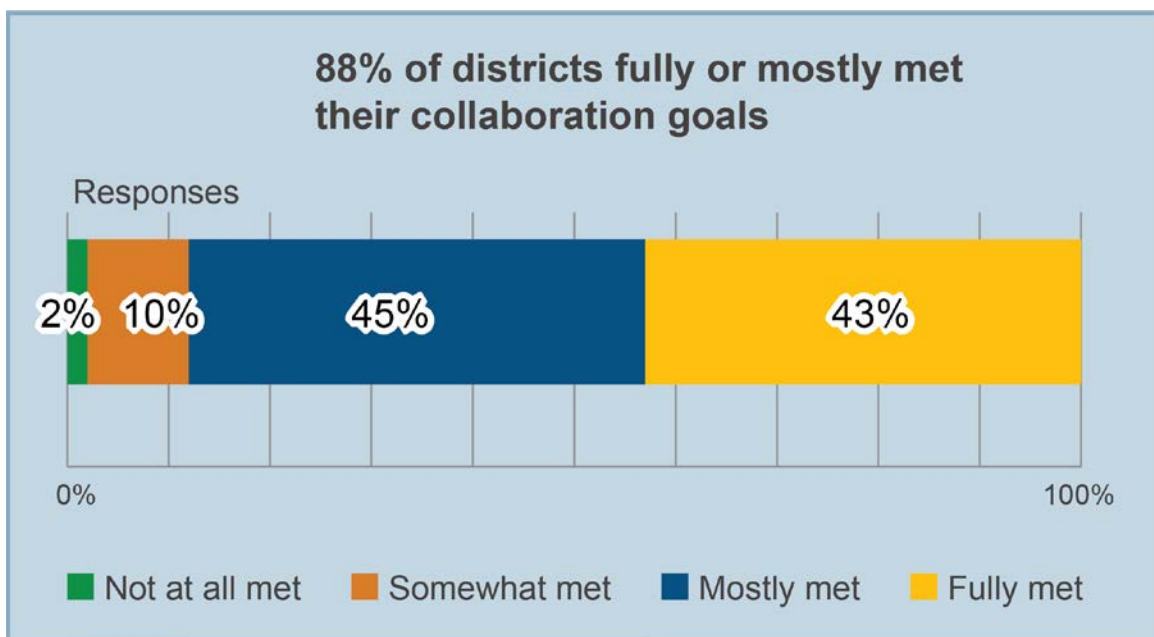
Collaboration

Goal

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

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.

Key Findings

- Teacher participation in full coaching cycles increased and reflected 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. *Wayne CSD leaders surveyed teachers and found that 96% of the respondents reported that they met regularly with an instructional coach to set goals, plan for instruction, and have reflective conversations regarding observations and instructional practices. Additionally, 94% believed that instructional coaching had positively affected student learning outcomes.*

- The activities and outcomes of PLCs improved through TLC leadership roles by providing more structure, support, and increased accountability. *Northwood-Kensett CSD leaders described that all staff participated in PLCs two to three times per month and that TLC leaders met with each group regularly. Such designated time is crucial for teacher collaboration and reflection.*
- Collaboration had a positive effect on culture and climate in the school. Teachers reported that sharing professionally with each other positively impacted their teaching. *A teacher from North Iowa CSD stated, "Two minds are better than one! I like to plan with others because I know that I can learn from ideas/strategies they may have to bring to the table planning together." According to the North Iowa CSD report, TLC work is reinforcing the values of collaboration and working toward the goal of boosting student achievement.*
- 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. *Howard Winneshiek CSD leaders furthered teacher collaboration opportunities by inviting teachers to observe and learn from each other through structured observations hosted by an instructional coach. These opportunities allowed for general observations, cross-grade level observations, and cross-curriculum observations focused on learning a new technique or instructional practice.*
- Collaboration has changed teacher practices across the state. *Eldora CSD's survey revealed that 77% of teachers reported, "As a result of collaboration, I have changed my lessons." According to a Central Dewitt CSD teacher survey, 99% of teachers felt that instructional coaches collaborated with teachers to solve problems and support student learning. Tri-Center CSD's TLC implementation survey showed that collaboration around the use of student work to guide instructional decision-making and the use of formative/summative assessments to drive instruction increased. Those who worked with teacher leaders overwhelmingly reported (94.7%) that TLC was a positive experience.*

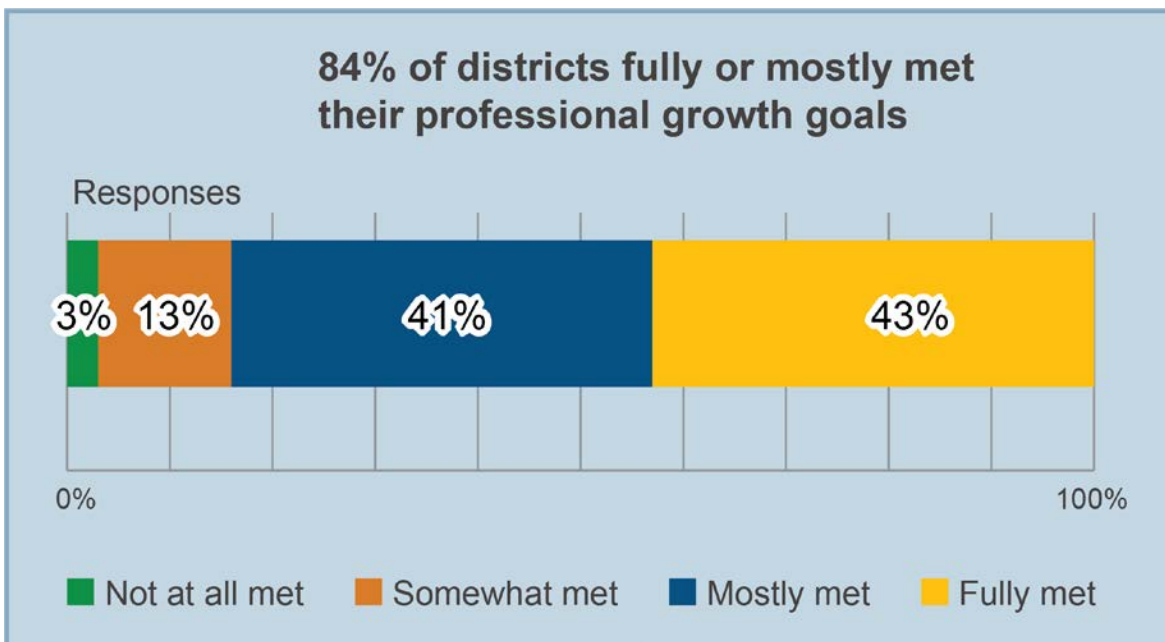
Reward Professional Growth

Goal

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

Summary

TLC offered new pathways for exceptional teachers to share their best practices with colleagues, without necessarily having to leave their own classrooms. A review of end-of-year reports showed that 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.

Key Findings

- Most districts were able to fill their TLC roles with qualified teacher leaders, and those teacher leaders are returning to their positions. *Davis County CSD leaders stated that a review of human resources data indicated that there had been a high degree of continuity from 2015 to 2017 in terms of people in specific leadership roles. They envisioned that teachers who accepted coaching roles would continue in those roles for five years due to the extensive training provided.*

- Teacher leadership roles and responsibilities have been redefined by districts in order to maximize TLC to leverage student achievement goals. *West Liberty CSD leaders communicated that their approach to TLC has changed. They hired a new position for TLC leadership to focus the work on specific areas of teaching and learning. The district will continually evaluate how to best use their Teacher Leaders to impact collaboration and student achievement. Okoboji CSD leaders created new positions that matched their district teacher and learning needs and the passions/strengths of their teaching staff. District leaders reported that 39% of their staff applied for a teacher leader position.*
- Teacher leaders received professional development to support their district roles. Fort Dodge CSD leaders provided each full-time teacher leader professional learning opportunities in areas of content as well as in coaching skills. These trainings were provided by the New Teacher Center, the Department, and AEAs. *A Fort Dodge teacher leader stated, "I feel supported as a teacher leader by TLC because I am given so many opportunities to grow my own learning through professional learning, professional reading with my team....I am absolutely better because of these opportunities." Newton CSD leaders shared that increased opportunities for professional growth has empowered teacher leaders to model and share their resources and knowledge with all of their staff.*
- 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. *Newel Fonda CSD leaders reported that, prior to TLC, Individual Teacher Career Development Plans (ITCDPs) were under-used. Now, ITCDPs are discussed throughout the year with instructional coaches, principals, and PLC members. Instructional coaches also completed formative assessment observations and collected data from every classroom. The coaches presented professional development based on this data. They visited individual teachers to provide feedback and guide reflection on implementation. TLC allowed the district to utilize instructional coaches to improve learning experiences by personalizing teaching and learning for every student and staff member based on feedback, reflection, and data collected.*

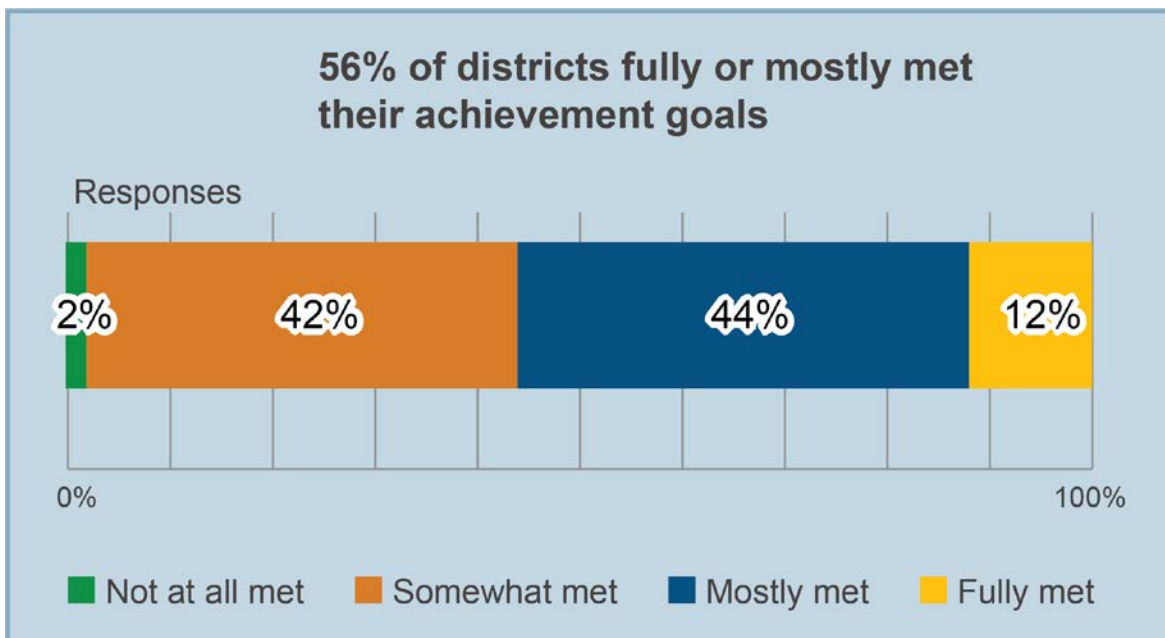
Student Achievement

Goal

Improve student achievement by strengthening instruction.

Summary

In their end-of-year reports, districts were pleased to share 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.

Key Findings

- 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 Assessments data, districts also used measurements such as FAST, MAP, BRI, student engagement data, common formative assessments, and Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports data. *Wayne CSD leaders reported that their Iowa Assessments results showed growth for the majority of grade levels in all content areas. Riceville CSD leaders shared growth in their spring reading and math MAP cohort data for all grade levels with the exception of 6th grade. Vinton-Shellsburg CSD leaders stated that the extra support for adults has greatly impacted their students. In the last year, they maintained or increased Iowa Assessments results across the district.*

- Classroom observations revealed greater student engagement in higher-order thinking tasks. *MOC-Floyd Valley CSD leaders shared that instructional rounds were conducted in each building throughout the year. Observation data clearly showed students were asked to engage in higher-order tasks and wrestle with higher-order questions on a consistent basis. This is an increase over the previous year. West Monona Elementary's Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI) 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.*
- Districts used TLC resources to align curriculum, instruction, and assessments to Iowa's academic standards. *Independence CSD leaders are committed to increasing student achievement. They know this involves aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The TLC grant provided the support needed to do this work. Ar-We-Va CSD leaders shared that all teachers included Iowa's academic standards in their lesson plans. Teacher leaders guided this work.*

***Bedford:** The TLC program has built a culture where educators talk about what is working and what is not working with regard to instruction and student learning. This culture has enhanced the confidence of many teachers to take on leadership opportunities with their colleagues.*
