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**Teacher Leadership and
Compensation System**

2019-20

Statewide End-of-Year

Report Summary



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Introduction

Iowa leads the nation with its innovative Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) system, the most comprehensive initiative of its kind in the United States. TLC rewards effective teachers with leadership opportunities and increased 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 result is a more robust teaching profession based on local measures of success, according to the 2019-20 Statewide End-of-Year Report Summary.

The overriding philosophy of the system is multi-pronged, but it boils down to this: Improving student learning requires improving the instruction they receive every 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 supporting colleagues, analyzing data, assisting with instructional strategies both in-person and online, coaching and co-teaching, technology integration, and induction of new staff.

The goals of the TLC system are to:

- Attract able and promising new teachers by offering competitive starting salaries as well as providing 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 teachers by providing pathways for career opportunities that come with increased leadership responsibilities and involve increased compensation.
- Improve student achievement by strengthening instruction.

The 2019-20 school year marked the fourth year that every district in the state has implemented TLC. The state allocated \$162,738,249 in fiscal year 2020 (FY 20) to support districts in their TLC implementation efforts. Every district received \$326.50 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. Updated plans may be found at <https://reports.educateiowa.gov/EOYPublic/Home/Plan>. Since 2014, when the first cohort of districts began the TLC process, the Department has approved over 1,900 plan changes.

Districts continually reflect on their progress toward the vision and goals of their TLC plans. The 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 asked 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 end-of-year reports submitted by school districts during the 2019-20 school year. Each district's complete, end-of-the-year report is available at <https://reports.educateiowa.gov/EOYPublic>.

The Department and its Teacher Leadership Compensation team responded to COVID-19's impact on school districts, in spring 2020 to better serve our TLC leaders. This included flexibility in developing new TLC positions that could immediately be implemented to best meet the local needs of students and teachers. Some of these positions were focused on technology, online learning, and new teaching strategies to support remote learning. This report contains summary data from the district's TLC end-of-the year reports as well as interview data (teacher and teacher leader quotes) collected by Region 9 Comprehensive Center Network.

The Region 9 Comprehensive Center, operated by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) through a U.S. Department of Education grant since October 2019, provides intensive capacity-building services to state education agencies and other education stakeholders in Iowa and Illinois.

The following six considerations, based on the recent Region 9 needs assessment, are for school and district leaders who may wish to strengthen, refine, or recalibrate their TLC implementation approach:

1. Consider which students are most in need of support
2. Consider measures that can best capture student growth
3. Provide teacher leaders with targeted professional development on data use and evidence-based practices
4. Share successes and best practices via annual TLC reporting
5. Help teacher leaders analyze and share information about student learning trends over time
6. Provide time for teacher leaders to grow professionally
7. Consider innovative teacher leader roles

Region 9 also indicated a strong correlation between the work of teacher leaders and their impact on low-achieving students. The needs assessment included 48 interviews and focus groups in 14 school districts across Iowa that had some of the highest year-over-year growth scores on the FAST [Formative Assessment System for Teachers], which is an early literacy screener assessment. Through these interviews and focus groups, Region 9 identified several themes, best practices, and recommendations that other schools and districts across Iowa may find informative for their own TLC implementation.

Overall Findings

Teacher leadership continues to be a key lever for school performance in districts across the state. Driven by a statewide vision, districts are reporting that the program has now become a fixture in their schools' functioning, amplifying teacher voice, and contributing to increased student achievement. Each district has designed and refined their program to align to their local needs. The following themes were evident in end-of-year reports from across the state:

- New-to-the-profession teachers continue to show success in the work they are doing with TLC leaders and mentors. They cite meaningful connections to the Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria (ITSC), building collaborative relationships, and increasing confidence as they begin their careers as classroom teachers.
- Districts continue to utilize collaboration among existing structures to support student achievement through improved teaching strategies. These connections are noted between TLC and Professional Learning Communities (PLC), reflective coaching practices and cycles, use of instructional frameworks to support common languages, aligned professional development to both building needs and Individual Career Development Plans (ICPD), as well as other Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).
- The roles of teacher leaders continue to evolve as their capacity to deliver meaningful professional development increases. This increase is a direct result of the teacher leaders' access to research based professional development. The end result is teacher professional development based on student learning needs.
- Student achievement data collection continues to be a foundational theme for district TLC programs. Local end-of-the-year reports noted student learning indicators, student success as defined by Iowa Academic Standards, student cognitive engagement, as well as personalized learning systems for individual students. This work was done without the added data that would have been collected from Spring FastBridge Testing, the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP), Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Testing, as well as other district assessments that were not completed due to COVID-19.
- Teacher Leadership roles and responsibilities came under unanticipated demands due to COVID-19 related needs. Teacher leaders and TLC teams adapted, designed and implemented supports that made transitions possible, while keeping student learning at the forefront of education.
- TLC continues to evolve and grow within Iowa school districts. This is evidenced by the multiple new leadership roles in the various TLC programs, the increased number of teachers participating in coaching cycles, and the implementation and involvement in professional development through instructional frameworks. Districts are still seeking new ways to participate in continual learning and engagement in the TLC processes.

Attract and Retain

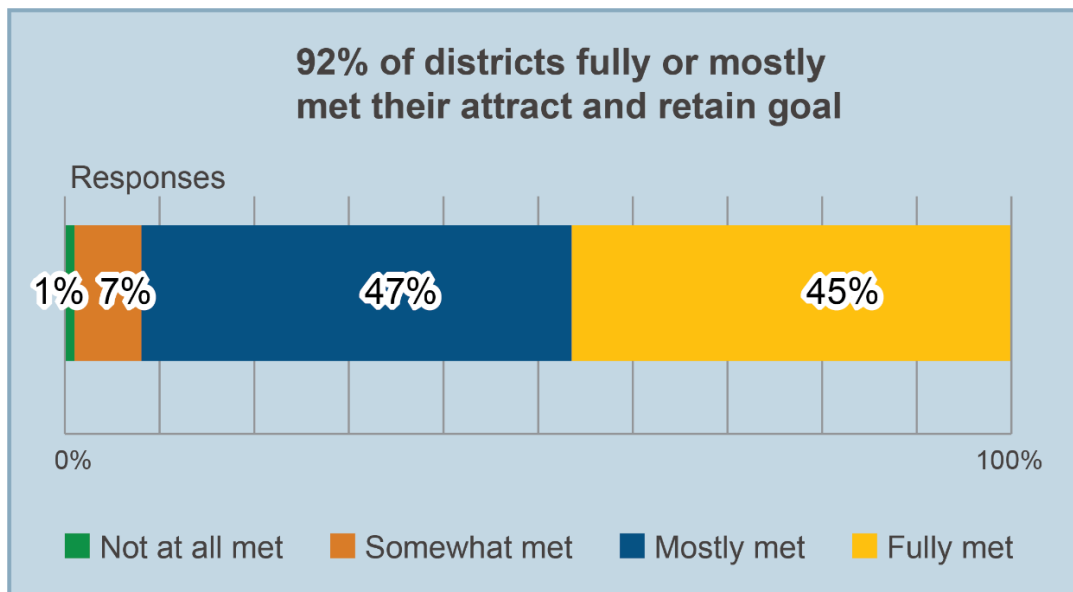
Goals

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.

Summary

Through larger base salaries and additional opportunities for teachers to have meaningful leadership roles, districts are reporting solid growth in attracting and retaining teachers. Improved mentoring programs provide support to new and career teachers.



For the 2019-20 school year, 92 percent of school districts reported fully or mostly met their local “attract and retain” teachers growth goal. That is up 3 percentage points from the 89 percent of districts that fully or mostly met their “attract and retain” goal in 2018-19.

Key Findings

Districts cited TLC leaders as being a key resource, benefit, and support for new teachers.

- **Aplington-Parkersburg** stated that 96 percent of their teachers reported support provided by the TLC program had a positive impact on their professional practice.
- **Nevada** noted that their TLC supports were centered around the ITSC (Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria), which helped their new teachers gain confidence in their teaching practice.
- **College Community** shared that their new teacher end-of-the-year survey indicated that 100 percent of their new teachers felt the Teacher Leader system of supports had helped them to be successful in meeting the ITSC. This was up from 92 percent the previous year.
- **Estherville-Lincoln Central** reported, “While an optimum goal would be 100 percent retention, we understand that is likely not realistic as individuals have life changes that impact their decision

to stay or leave in any district such as marriage, spouse job transfer, or birth of a child. We continue to credit our current TLC plan with this overall improvement to our retention rate.”

- **Dallas Center-Grimes** added, “Our mentor teachers are invaluable supports to our early career teachers.”
- **Adel-DeSoto-Minburn** shared, “Without the TLC Program, the professional opportunities and supports would not be possible.”
- **Council Bluffs** shared, “We can connect mentoring directly to collaboration due to the close nature of the work between mentors and teachers new to the profession and district. Mentors have consistently received high levels of satisfaction from those they serve. 2019-20 produced another all-time high satisfaction level of 100 percent. This is compared to previous years of 86 percent, 91 percent, 93 percent, 96 percent, and 96 percent from 2014-15 to 2018-19 respectively. We attribute this high level of satisfaction to mentors providing high quality and timely feedback to new teachers in order to improve practice.”

Districts noted that TLC leaders created a path for building meaningful relationships between new and experienced teachers.

- **South Hamilton** shared, “In all of our interviews, our TLC mentoring program was emphasized, and we were able to hire all candidates from our top tier of applicants. These new teachers have already been assigned mentors and are in contact for preparation for next year.”
- **Indianola** added, “Since day one, I have felt that the TLC mentoring program has always put our well-being at the forefront. It’s always nice to be reminded that we need to promote both our professional and personal well-being for the betterment of our classrooms.”
- **Carroll** reported the following from a first-year teacher, “My mentor entirely shaped my first year. She made the transition into this year feel seamless. I look forward to continuing to work with and learn from her.”
- **Cedar Falls** observed that their TLC mentors provided a resource to new teachers that was there to meet any need, in any area.

Districts worked in collaboration with their Area Education Agency (AEA) to train mentees in support of new to the profession teachers in their district.

- **Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn** utilized the mentoring Journey to Excellence/ Mentoring Matters course through the Northwest AEA. Three teachers/mentees and three mentors participated in year one of the mentoring course. We had three teachers and three mentors participate in year two of the mentoring course. In addition to year one and year two mentors, TLC allowed mentors for new-to-the-district teachers...TLC allowed these teachers a positive experience.

Most districts identified increased rates of teacher retention that they attributed to the work of Teacher Leaders.

- **Baxter** shared, “In the elementary we anticipate 81 percent retention of instructors. The middle/high school retains 94 percent of staff. We believe our retention is directly related to our collaboration and trust within each building. Collaboration is happening in multiple ways on multiple levels. K-5 and 6-12 each have a full-time release coach to support and encourage teachers and have an impact on student learning. These coaches work with teachers in creating goals that will increase student learning in the classroom as well as working with teachers on their IPDP. Coaches meet regularly with individual teachers as well as in their PLC.”
- **Estherville-Lincoln Central** stated that they continue to credit their current TLC plan with the overall improvement on their retention rate.

Region 9 Interview Quotes

- **Council Bluffs:** “When we implemented TLC, we also created full-time teachers, and they solely focus on first-year teachers, second-year teachers, and teachers new to the district. Every person is assigned a teacher mentor. We have seen huge success with this...”
- **Washington:** “Mentor teachers have been really helpful to the new teachers. Especially specific to just classroom management coming out of college, that’s always really tricky, and just support

is needed. New teachers asking a lot of questions and feeling like they have someone to go to in the building that isn't judging them, isn't going to go talk to the principal. You know, sometimes you just need to be real with people. So, mentor teachers have been really helpful for the new teachers in that sense.”

COVID-19 Responses: Many districts adapted their mentoring of new teachers to focus on remote learning.

- **Ankeny** shared that the Mentoring and Induction Program develops teachers through layered support from individual Teacher Leaders at the building level to district level Teacher Leaders working in collaboration on learning and training opportunities that engage new teachers on best practices. During the 2019-2020 school year we were faced with unprecedented challenges we haven't experienced before due to the pandemic of the coronavirus. Teachers were supported through immediate and timely professional development in order to successfully ensure high levels of learning for students through the development of webinars and trainings offered by Teacher Leaders across the district via online platforms.
- **Gilbert** noted that in a survey 95 percent of staff felt positively supported, including TLC resources, during COVID-19 related closure and online learning.

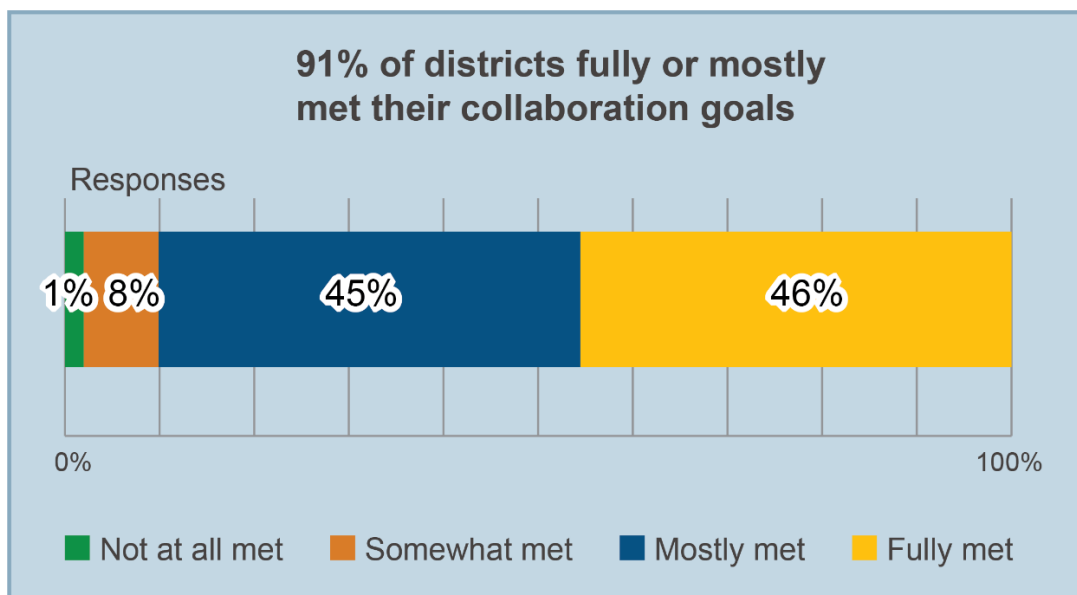
Collaboration

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 various strategies such as peer observations, learning labs, coaching cycles, co-planning and co-teaching, and PLCs as identified in the Iowa Professional Development Mode (IPDM).



For the 2019-20 school year, 91 percent of districts reported fully or mostly met their local collaboration goal, an increase of 4 percentage points compared to 87 percent in 2018-19.

Key Findings

Teacher Leaders continue to collaborate with and/or serve as leads for PLCs in their district.

- **Ballard** shared the collaborative work that their TLC teacher leaders and PLC leaders were doing to provide a more structured and supportive PLC process.
- **Benton** reported, “We are excited that our Board approved calendar provides time for teacher leaders to support effective collaboration and instruction by providing staff with time for feedback and data analysis on a weekly basis. This is how we will achieve the goal of accelerating student learning throughout the year and for years to come.”
- **Clinton** cited multiple structures in place to promote teacher collaboration, including PLCs. Their 2020 teacher survey indicated that 91 percent of their teachers believe that their PLC teams contribute to the learning process positively.

- **Keokuk** cited the following results from their End-of-the-Year Learning Cycle survey, completed by teachers that worked with TLC Teacher Coaches: 100 percent engaged in reflective dialogue, received open, honest, and constructive feedback, received direct support with curriculum, content knowledge, strategy integration, and PLC facilitation, professional development related to best practices, the Iowa Academic Standards, and instruction, and were provided with meaningful opportunities to collaborate and learn from each other.
- **Treynor** shared a teacher anecdote regarding TLC lead collaboration: “PLC teams are always looking at real time data. Some PD was devoted to FastBridge and benchmarking data. Teachers spend a lot of time using this data to drive instruction.”

Most districts reported on the crucial role of instructional coaches using coaching cycles and reflective practices.

- **Des Moines** noted the following from their TLC End-of-the-Year Learning Cycle Teacher Survey: “Overall, the TLC Coaching Sessions have been effective for me.: 97 percent Agreed & <3 percent Disagreed. When working with the TLC Coach, I felt comfortable taking risks? 97 percent Agreed & <4 percent Disagreed.”
- **Atlantic** reported, “Last year we started doing some student-centered coaching cycles through the TLC program. We continued that this year and had eight teachers going through the process. Unfortunately, with the timing of most of them, we were unable to complete five of them due to the COVID-19 shutdown. The three that were completed showed great growth of our students. We went from 13 percent proficient on pre-test to 97 percent proficient on post-tests as well as moved those that were proficient on pretest to a much higher standard on the post-test. All showed growth.”
- **Denison** added, “We had an instructional coach in one of our four buildings this past school year, but are excited to have one in every building beginning in the 2020-2021 school year. We saw benefits in student learning when the instructional coach met with teachers. The best results we are seeing is from the instructional coach at the elementary level who observed and gave informal and formal feedback to all teachers in the building throughout the school year.”

Teacher Leaders collaborate with teachers in a variety of ways to support student achievement efforts.

- **Marshalltown** stated that all teachers in the District were served by teacher leaders in some capacity. In our Multi-Tiered TLC System, ongoing professional learning takes place in multiple arenas. At the building level, the instructional coach, Building Leadership Team (BLT), PLC leads, and mentors provided building-wide and individual support.
- **Dallas Center-Grimes** described that their teacher leadership system has grown our collaborative culture throughout the years in which it now is a natural part of how we do business. Master schedules are structured around purposeful and intentional collaboration opportunities, and teacher leaders are in place to foster the collaboration focused on the four driving questions of a PLC: What do we want students to learn? How will we know students learned it? How will we respond when students didn’t learn? How will we respond when students already know it?
- **River Valley** reported that their coaches have supported their K-12 teaching staff by modeling instructional practices, co-teaching, developing curricular units, and engaging in classroom reflection. Of their 39 teachers, 100 percent of them have benefited from this in-depth professional development support having received support in the form of assistance in research, access to instructional articles, consultation, and informal observation feedback from teacher leaders.
- **Spencer** shared a teacher anecdote: “I was able to take the resources given by the coach, and the guidance from discussion, to change my wording and examples to help students better fulfill substantive conversation in our online format.”
- **Nevada** shared that the data they received from this year’s survey indicated that a majority of their staff feel that their instruction and student learning is being impacted by the efforts of their staff within the TLC program. Staff across the district are receiving layered support from Instructional Guides, LTCs, and Peer Advisors. Based on the data that is collected they feel that

every one of their teachers is receiving personalized targeted support through coaching sessions and Authentic Intellectual Work (AIW) scoring sessions.

Many districts addressed the importance of a “common language” as a centerpiece for powerful collaboration. This common language is often defined through an instructional framework.

- **Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton** noted that next year they have decided to continue to use the Iowa Instructional Framework (IIF) to help build a common framework which includes common language and vision for effective high-quality teaching across an entire school district. With the introduction of the Iowa IIF, they have now begun to implement a system for the whole district to have conversation around what good/great teaching looks like. They will continue to build on this framework until it is systemic within the district from the hiring practices to exit interviews.
- **Martensdale-St. Marys** wrote that the instructional coaches, professional development leads, and district administrators participated in year one of the IIF training and the “train the trainer” sessions offered by the Department. The “deep dive” training was extremely helpful to team members, as the IIF was the focus of district professional development for the year. An action plan was developed in the summer of 2019 and followed, sharing learning with all district teachers on each professional development day. Indicators were introduced and collaborative discussions took place in large group and PLC settings.
- **West Hancock** shared, “Instructional coaches continued to do traditional coaching cycles and meaningful support through the IIF.”
- **South Hamilton** reported that the TLC has given their school an opportunity to create a more common language. Although they are in two buildings, they hear more unified conversations about the different positions, responsibilities, utilizations, and outcomes. For the 2020-21 school year, they will be splitting the instructional coach and technology integrationist roles and adding a literacy coordinator to their positions. A technology survey revealed that they needed to be more intentional with their technology integration and this will provide a specific focus for that person. The literacy coordinator will bring continuity to their classrooms and schoolwide reading requirements and opportunities.

Region 9 Interview Quotes:

- **Clayton Ridge:** “I think that collaboration and spending time with our team really helps us to use best practices in teaching...and having more than just one person to figure out what to do in their classroom. You have more voices to help you” and “Our teachers don’t feel alone or don’t have anybody to go to or collaborate with when they have questions or want to brainstorm or are out there. So just providing that support so that you don’t feel alone and that constant collaboration effort to want to improve for students for success.”
- **Davis County:** “The first few years the model teachers were hugely important because we had implemented the writing curriculum/strategies, but not all of the units. So those model classroom teachers were implementing with fidelity all of the units of study and they had my support. Other teachers really wanted to come in and see what that looked like and how they could provide that small group instruction, how they provided large group instruction, and just see the structure of the whole thing...”

COVID-19 Responses: Many districts adapted their collaborative efforts to meet the needs and adjustments that came along with COVID-19.

- **West Des Moines** noted that with school closure, teachers shifted their focus to support the building of capacity with teachers in a virtual teaching setting.
- **Atlantic** added, “With the COVID-19 shutdown, we saw a large increase in teacher collaboration in order to meet the needs of our students learning from home.”

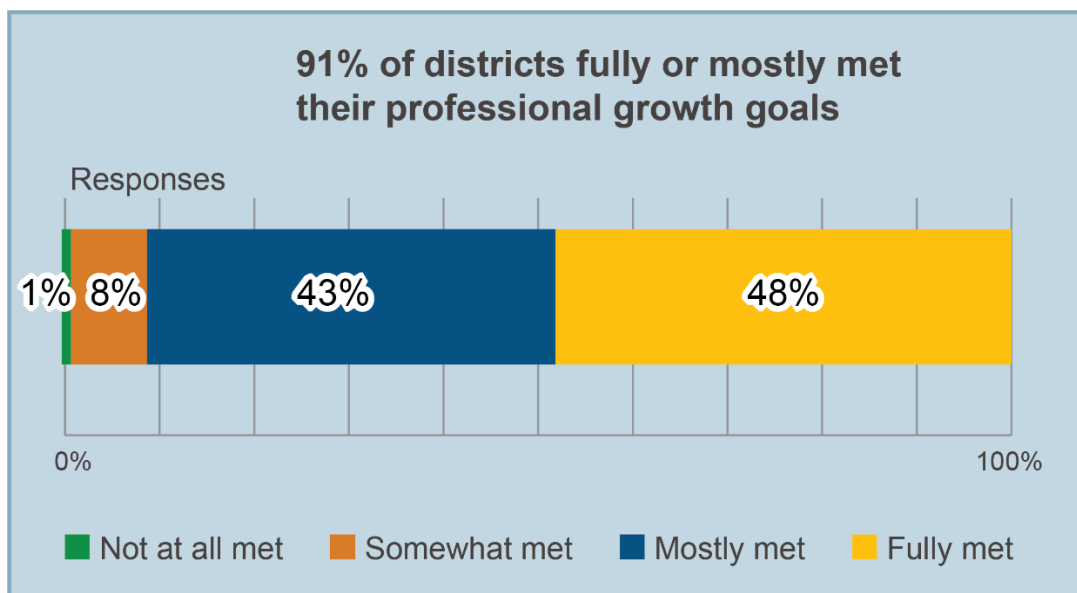
Reward Professional Growth

Goal

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

Summary

TLC offers new pathways for exceptional leaders 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 career teachers, are benefiting from the new leadership roles.



For the 2019-20 school year, 91 percent of districts reported that they fully or mostly met their professional growth goal. That compares to 86 percent in 2018-19, an increase of 5 percentage points.

Key Findings

Many districts reported that Teacher Leaders support the professional growth of teachers across the district.

- **Charter Oak-Ute** shared from their TLC survey, “Data from our TLC surveys showed that 92 percent of teachers who worked with teacher leaders indicated the collaboration impacted, or highly impacted, their instruction. Narrative feedback regarding the impact strongly suggested that all teacher leader roles played a significant role in impacting instruction across all grade levels.”
- **Clarke** reported that their TLC success coaches provided professional development for staff throughout the year in areas associated with at risk students. This support from their TLC leaders included: engagement strategies, social and emotional behaviors, as well as trauma-informed instruction.

- **West Burlington** noted that their teacher leaders provided weekly professional development through small groups. These groups took on the following topics: curriculum alignment with the Iowa Academic Standards, PLC Team meeting frameworks, as well as the peer review process.

Many districts reported that teacher leaders coached teachers through coaching cycles and reflective practices.

- **Madrid** shared that their teachers were given the opportunity to work specifically on their Individual Career Development Plan (ICDP), with colleagues. After reflecting on their plans with peers and teacher leaders, they presented their plans/findings to the entire faculty. This process received such positive feedback from staff, that they will be repeating this process during the 2020-21 school year.
- **Woodward-Granger** added that their teacher leaders provided reflection opportunities for their teachers through a Peer Review process, giving teachers the opportunities to observe each other, followed by reflection on quality instruction, effective classroom management strategies, and implementation of the Iowa Academic Standards.
- **I-35** committed 36 hours of protected collaboration time for teachers. This time led to collaboration that supported coaching, reflection, analysis, peer discussions, and learning.

Many districts based their professional development efforts, supported by teacher leaders, on teacher needs identified through their ICDPs.

- **Colo-Nesco** shared that during the 2019-20 school year they changed the professional development calendar and approach towards ICDPs. Teachers had regularly scheduled ICDP time during professional development time throughout the year. As part of meeting the requirements around a teacher's ICDP they had to engage in ongoing coaching with our instructional coaches.
- **South Hamilton** reported their ICDP data showed 100 percent of their teachers completed an ICDP plan in collaboration with their instructional coaches, and were assisted by regular clarification reminders. Many teachers participated in a book study led by their instructional coaches that will help teachers fulfill their ICDP requirement.

Professional Development, led by teacher leaders, supported specific needs identified by the districts.

- **Nevada** noted that the TLC positions were provided various leadership training opportunities AIW coaches training, Cognitive Coaching I & II, participated in a book study around one of six choices. Based on the book they chose, they were placed in a book study group that met throughout the summer and school year to discuss the book and share their learning. TLC staff members engaged in creating an instructional playbook during the 2019-20 school year. Each one or our TLC positions played a part in the creation of the playbook that will be utilized by our K-12 staff.
- **Indianola** reported that Career and Innovation (C&I) teachers noted positive support to innovate in their classroom. One mentioned that she didn't have to "feel like I was breaking a rule" when she tried something that she had read research about and felt would benefit her students. Another mentioned that being a C&I teacher "pushes me to stay on the cutting edge and try new things (encouraging me to get out of my comfort zone and DO IT)." Though not a direct question, 40 percent of them pointed to working with their coach as a piece of their innovation. In addition to learning and innovating, 80 percent of C&I teachers shared what they were learning with their PLC teams, 68 percent were involved in planning or facilitating their building professional development, and 60 percent worked with teachers who reached out for support in trying something new.
- **Van Meter** commented that the district wanted to maintain the support and implementation of projects throughout the district. Technology integrationists (full-time classroom teachers that showcased technology tools and provided pop-up professional development) were successful in encouraging technology integration into project-based learning. Not only did students surveys indicate that projects were happening more regularly, we had a couple of projects receive statewide attention at Future Ready Iowa events and AEA events.

Region 9 Interview Quotes:

- **Grundy Center:** “On a district wide survey, 96 percent of our teachers reported support provided to them through individuals in the TLC program had a positive impact on their professional practice.

COVID-19 Responses: Many districts adapted their professional development and growth to adapt to the teaching and learning changes brought on by COVID-19.

- **Spencer** cited teacher leaders that made smooth transitions into the virtual learning facilitation process as their district went to remote learning. Their technology integrationist supported elementary grade level strategists while transitioning to programs like Seesaw and WeVideo. Likewise, their director of school improvement created learning videos for teachers at all levels as they transitioned to remote learning, communication, and teaching.
- **Southeast Polk** shared that their professional development expanded to include Canvas, Google Classroom, ZOOM, Google Meet, and teaching the basics of teaching and learning virtually. This all took place after school closure, as teachers continued to learn in their new virtual environments and continued to have access to teacher leaders electronically.

Student Achievement

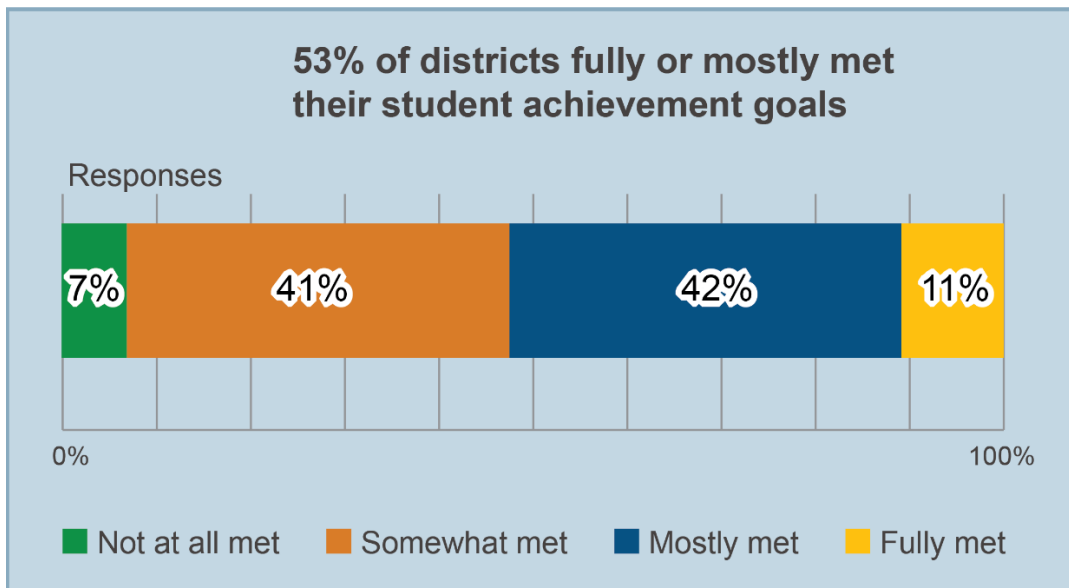
Goal

Improve student achievement by strengthening instruction.

Summary

In their end-of-year reports, most districts shared increases in academic performance, graduation rates, college entrance rates and other positive indicators. Districts used various data sources to assess the impact of their TLC program on academic performance including internal assessments, universal screeners and teacher observation. They widely reported TLC as one of several factors contributing to student achievement gain, and districts saw a greater tie between the TLC program and student achievement as they refined implementation of the TLC system.

Due to COVID-19, districts did not have other data sources, like the annual state assessment (ISASP), MAP and FastBridge, when they completed their end-of-year reports. That negatively impacted the percentage of districts fully or mostly meeting their student achievement goal-because some districts reported “not at all met” or “somewhat met” due to the missing data.



In the 2019-20 school year, 53 percent of districts reported that they fully or mostly met their student achievement goal. This decrease from 58 percent in the 2018-19 school year was heavily impacted by missing spring student achievement data that was unavailable due to the pandemic.

Key Findings

Teacher Leaders supported classroom teachers in analyzing student assessment data to inform instructional planning.

- **Ankeny** shared that in addition to the student achievement assessment data, and the observations using the Professional Learning Indicators, their TLC leaders and teachers also examined classroom implementation of research-based instructional practices using Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT). ELEOT offered a holistic approach as it was comprehensive and all buildings were represented.
- **West Monona** shared, “West Monona TLC is very much involved in collecting data about student cognitive engagement during class time, as it is a district imperative to increase student engagement. Our team organizes the data into charts and power points that can be easily shared with teachers at staff meetings and professional development seminars.”
- **Forest City** stated that their instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and mentors have partnered with their district teachers in order to analyze classroom data, develop key findings, and then take action in order to improve student learning. Student data is at the heart of the collaborative work between teachers and their TLC program.
- **Clear Lake** added that tools such as student achievement data, evidence of instructional strategy use by classroom teachers, and the utilization of pre and post data from TLC coaching cycles showed increased student achievement for their district.
- **Mediapolis** indicated that their teachers, administrators, and instructional coaches consistently collaborate while studying multiple sources of data related to student achievement. “This data helps us look at resources and any skill gaps that we might have in these grades or in the grades below these grades. This is a summary of what our district does in terms of data. The reason I gave a heavy summary is that our instructional coaches go through this data with us all the time. Our 6-12 coach is a data-miner. He has spent tons of time in his logs talking to teachers about the data, and it is driving their instruction.”

Districts reported a correlation between the implementation of teacher leadership and student achievement.

- **Estherville-Lincoln Central** quoted a teacher, “The coaching cycle and work with teacher leaders has forced me to take the time to develop relationships with my students that I would not have done otherwise. Pushed me to improve myself and my teaching to benefit my students. Helped me with lesson planning/inclusion of technology and new ideas. Helped me to focus on certain areas of my teaching and gave me the opportunity to reflect. I feel I am better prepared for my students. I take into consideration the things that matter and impact student learning more. The coaching cycle gets you to think about the instructional decisions you make, and which ones will have more impact on student learning. Gives time to sit down and reflect on current practices and how they could be adjusted to further benefit students. Improves my lessons. It has gotten me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to try new things, and also perfect my lessons. It got me to try something different and I will incorporate more of it in my teaching. Teacher leaders have provided me with new ideas and strategies and has given me new ideas to try with struggling students.”
- **Center Point-Urbana** reported that instructional coaches will match high level instructional strategies with student data in order to improve teacher practice. When teacher practice improves, then student growth and achievement will be evident on a variety of assessments. Those high-level practices include, but are not limited to; demonstration teaching, lesson and unit planning, classroom observation and feedback, analysis of student work, cooperative assessment of instructional practice, facilitating collaboration among teachers, setting professional goals that align with the Iowa Academic Standards collaborating with current and future instructional coaches in helping teachers examine student learning data and identifying areas for improvement.
- **Van Meter** wrote that with teacher leadership roles, a more personalized learning system is now in place for students and overall achievement results show a positive trend. Using the most recent statewide assessment data available (2019 Iowa Assessments), the past six years of implementing instructional coaching models in our schools (prior to full TLC implementation), have shown a positive trend in reading, math and science.

Multiple districts shared that teacher leaders lead the Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) process as buildings focus on student needs.

- **Spirit Lake** reported that they had 86 percent of elementary and middle school classroom teachers report on the TLC peer review that the MTSS interventions were at a 4,5, or 6 effectiveness on a 1-6 scale. This percentage is dramatically improved from 45.4 percent reported at a 4-6 in 2018-2019. MTSS interventions were a major focus for elementary and middle school TLC leaders this year, and they spent time working with teachers in PLC groups and individually during MTSS time. The middle school instructional coach spent significant amounts of time and work centered around implementing MTSS with all grades and helping teachers look at MTSS curriculum and data. They also had 90 percent of elementary and middle school teachers who responded to the peer review survey say they met with their MTSS groups and provided enrichment at least weekly.
- **Bettendorf** reported that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district utilized the TLC instructional coaches and curriculum and professional development leads (CPD's) in a manner that will better support the increasing needs of teachers and students. The August 2020 assessment data results will drive the actions of this team. MTSS support will be critical this upcoming year. Instructional coaches and CPD's will assist with student intervention groups, progress monitoring, assessment, and co-teaching.

Many districts have noted support TLC Leaders provide in the formation of student, classroom and even grade-level interventions.

- **Springville** shared, "All elementary teachers were able to analyze math assessments, provide a diagnostic assessment when necessary, and implement an intervention that matched our student needs. Additionally, we have implemented class-wide interventions in literacy and math, when appropriate, with guidance and support of our consultants from Grant Wood AEA."

Region 9 Interview Quotes:

- **Washington** "Students had better or a faster growth then they have in the years past when teachers were doing all kinds of different things. It has all been about getting teachers on board on the same types of practical challenges. So that has had an impact on students because they're able to decode words more, they're attempting to do it, they have strategies to do it, and they're not just getting to a word and looking up at the teacher and begging for help. They have some strategies that can help them with decoding."
- **Clayton Ridge** "...we just exploded as a proficiency compared to where we were because we really honed in on those specific skills and we knew exactly what our kids needed and where they needed to be. So, we did a lot of one-minute formative assessment checks on segmenting. We did it on blending words, we did it on letter sounds, all of those different fast skills along with just having them read, read, read and incorporate interactive writing to really bring all those skills back together. I feel like that one was, has been, one of our most powerful as a kindergarten team years to really see that when we hone in like that and we have the knowledge from our district specialist, we have the knowledge from our coach helping support us, how much we could really raise those kids coming in with no knowledge. At the beginning of the year and just exploding by the end of the year into readers."

COVID-19 Responses: Many districts cited the ability to utilize and gather student achievement data due to their TLC Plan and process, despite the setbacks as a result of COVID-19.

- **Clear Lake** noted some things about student achievement data. Evidence of instructional strategy use using pre- and post-data from their coaching cycles completed this year all showed improved student achievement. They noted that this year was a challenge due to no state assessment being done, and the COVID-19 Pandemic. That being noted, their staff did continually work through the PLC process, used teacher leaders to identify essential standards, developed common formative assessments and then worked in their collaborative teams to identify missing concepts/skills students needed to learn. The use of their guiding coalition helped

with the teams as they worked through the PLC process. The collaborative teams also identified the essential standards that students should have learned during the pandemic (March-May of 2020) and developed a formative assessment to identify the students that learned these standards and the students that did not learn them so they could come up with a plan to address the ones that did not learn them.

- **Dallas Center-Grimes** stated that due to COVID-19, our student achievement data is incomplete for the year. We were unable to give the ISASP assessment as well as finish the year with our FASTBridge assessments. However, as a district, we did spend time at the end of the year in PLC and content teams determining what standards students missed instruction around during our Voluntary Educational Enrichment Opportunities. This will guide our teachers' work to begin the 2020-2021 year in ensuring that any gaps in learning from the previous year are addressed in an appropriate manner.
- **Nevada** stated that although COVID-19 did not allow for any state assessments, or spring FastBridge testing, their TLC Plan and MTSS process did provide targeted interventions that were used with PK-8 students in the district.

Summary

Iowa is proud to have the most extensive Teacher Leadership System in the nation. Through TLC districts are improving instruction to raise achievement through unprecedented collaboration. Enhanced career opportunities have elevated the teaching profession. The 2019-20 school year marked the fourth school year all districts have implemented TLC. Launched in 2014-15 with 39 districts, and phased in over three years, TLC has transformed education with an annual investment now over \$160 million. The main focus continues to be improved student learning. Iowa's best teachers are empowered to lead that effort along-side school administrators.

For the 2019-20 school year, 92 percent of districts reported that they fully or mostly met their local "attract and retain" teacher goals. That is up three percentage points from 2018-19. Ninety-one percent of districts reported that they fully or mostly met their local "collaboration" goals, an increase of four percentage points. Student achievement was harder to measure because the pandemic interrupted assessments. Having noted the lack of assessment data, the outstanding work that districts are doing across the state is still evident, especially in this challenging school year.

All stakeholders will work together to continue to leverage TLC for the benefit of Iowa students. The Region 9 external evaluation of TLC's impact found much to praise, and also suggested districts consider more deliberate steps including targeted professional development on data use.

All indications are that TLC continues to be impactful in Iowa schools. The continued collaboration between districts, Area Education Agencies (AEAs), the Department, and other agencies assures best practice and continued growth among Teacher Leaders and the TLC system as a whole.