



Executive Summary

The South Carolina Department of Education partnered with the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ) and 12 schools across the state for the Collective Leadership Initiative (CLI) in support of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. Collective leadership encompasses the practices through which teachers and administrators influence colleagues, policymakers, and others to improve student outcomes. This is the work that is done in pursuit of shared goals such as the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

During the first year of the 12-school CLI pilot, school leaders surfaced a number of challenges, opportunities, and questions through five face-to-face convenings, surveys, interviews, site visits, and document analysis. Eight elements of collective leadership were analyzed including initial outcomes. Based on these data, a number of schools made bold moves and fundamentally improved their schools' orientation toward improvement. Importantly, they did that work with teachers and administrators across sites. They identified a clear need for shared vision, supportive administration, creative solutions to find time for collaboration, and innovative ideas for structuring positions and work.

However, as part of a two-year pilot, the essential component of the first year was determining the right questions to be answered in the second. As with any pilot, these questions will lead to answers that can support the scaling of collective leadership across South Carolina. The five questions to be answered over the next year of implementation will be:

- 1) How do we expand collective leadership practice without additional resources?
- 2) How do we make time for administrators and teachers to collaborate?
- 3) How do we more effectively identify the strengths of teachers as leaders and help them spread their expertise?
- 4) What student outcomes will be lead indicators of collective leadership development?
- 5) What obstacles and opportunities can be anticipated as South Carolina scales collective leadership development?



Why Collective Leadership?

Teaching and learning must look different if South Carolina students are going to be college- and career-ready as defined by the state's profile of the 21st Century high school graduate. Schools, now and in the future, drive student mastery of rigorous standards in core content (including science, technology, and engineering), and also in the world-class skills of creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communications.

The South Carolina Teacher Leader Model Design Team (Design Team) identified what it would mean for leadership to support world-class student outcomes. Teachers and administrators must be “learners, professionals, and effective communicators” with “global perspectives, integrity, passion, creativity, technology proficiency, interpersonal skills, and problem-solving abilities” all predicated on the ability to “reflect, persevere, and grow” with others. The roles of teachers and principals cannot remain static, and the schools and districts in which they work must support them in new ways. Research has clearly documented that teachersⁱ and principalsⁱⁱ are the two greatest school-level factors impacting student learning. Focusing on teacher leadership or administrative leadership is not enough to meet the demands of South Carolina's bold vision for graduates.

*Collective leadership encompasses the practices through which teachers and administrators influence colleagues, policymakers, and others to improve student outcomes.*ⁱⁱⁱ Collective leadership has a stronger influence on student achievement than individual leadership—and administrators do not lose influence when teachers gain it.^{iv} Collective leadership development occurs through webs of multiple, mutually reinforcing activities and experiences of teachers and administrators together.^v As one member of the Design Team said, “Collaborative cultures realize that we are smarter than any *one* of us.” Collective leadership cultivates this kind of collective efficacy. Research has shown that collective teacher efficacy is one of the most influential factors on student learning.^{vi}

Systems matter. Improvement is about more than one individual. W. Edward Deming noted almost 25 years ago, “a bad system beats a good person every time.”^{vii}

Both teachers and administrators are important.



Both are leaders.

Collective leadership cannot exist without teacher leadership. Research has proven that teachers learn to teach more effectively when they are supported in regulating their own teaching strategies, serve as resources for one another, and activate ownership of their own learning.^{viii} And teachers learn to lead when they have access to structured, strategic opportunities to spread their expertise to their colleagues and go public with evidence of their impact.^{ix} Teachers are more likely to be influenced to make instructional improvements by their teaching colleagues, those who walk in their *pedagogical shoes*. This kind of collaboration among educators results in student learning.^x

Principals must be catalysts of this effort.^{xi}

Developing a system where teachers and administrators co-construct the shared vision and goals is necessary to make essential adaptive changes to ensure personalized learning for **every** student. Collective leadership is more than teacher leadership, but it certainly cannot be less than teacher leadership. To move any school's mission forward, teachers must lead the work alongside administrators.

Leadership is about the work that moves an organization toward shared goals, and it is comprised of functions, not roles.^{xii} Particularly when we are concerned about equity and excellence, we must acknowledge that there is not a prescription that can be applied across diverse contexts.

The concept of “equifinality”^{xiii}—many roads to different solutions—must apply. This is the essence of collective leadership. By allowing the leadership work to determine the expertise that is needed to lead, educators can leverage the strengths of many, not just a few, as schools or districts seek to meet the unique needs of students. The closer the leadership work comes from and to the classroom, the more the school reform strategy can be influenced and led by teachers who work most closely with the ultimate beneficiaries: their students.

The Collective Leadership Initiative (CLI) is a three-year process of developing teachers and administrators to support the promise of the 21st Century Graduate. In partnership with the



Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ), this work includes facilitated support for pilot schools to prepare for scale. Not only does the work require a different way of thinking about leadership in schools, the work requires re-thinking departments and structures within the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). Uniting Educator Effectiveness and Leadership Development along with the work of other departments is essential to supporting shared goals across the state.

What is Collective Leadership in South Carolina?

Theory of action: if we develop a cohesive vision of collective leadership and a framework of differentiated support and implementation, then we will be able to support equitable access to excellent educators in all schools and districts and improve student performance through:

- 1. Effective collective leadership teams;*
- 2. Improved perceptions of the teaching profession;*
- 3. Increased teacher recruitment, retention, and advancement opportunities; and*
- 4. Effective teaching and data-responsive instructional practices.*

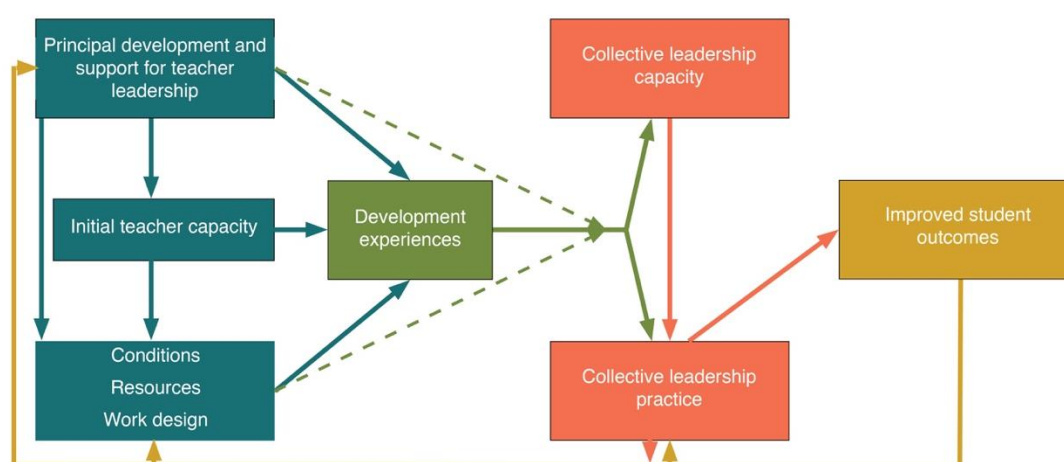
Collective leadership is not another program. Collective leadership is an iterative process for improved learning outcomes (See Figure 1 on next page). The leadership work and development are not prescriptive nor are they a formula. Instead, leadership is the work done toward shared goals. Therefore, leadership development is an essential component of that work. Through our work with 12 pilot schools in South Carolina, and growing numbers of schools across the United States, we have identified several antecedent conditions for collective leadership to flourish. They include the elements on the left side of the model: principal support, initial teacher capacity, school conditions, resources, and work design.

These antecedent factors influence development experiences and continue to influence the results of those experiences even after they have occurred. The development experiences



influence leadership capacity and practice that affect student outcomes. Of course, those outcomes and the improved leadership practice then influence the initial factors that support or constrain development. Through this model, collective leadership is a vehicle for building and leveraging existing educator effectiveness to achieve the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

Figure 1: Collective Leadership Development Model^{xiv}



This collective leadership theory of action is being tested and refined over three years.

- For Year One, the general frame is the planning year deliverable captured in the cloud-based guidebook that will remain a work-in-progress through the close of the three-year initiative.
- For Year Two, the pilot launch is described in the subsequent section, including five modules that build participating schools' awareness of what CLI is and how it operates to catalyze school improvement.
- Year Three deliverables will include summaries of the results of the two-year pilot, the final guidebook, as well as support for the SCDE's planning process on how to take collective leadership to scale.

The three-year initiative represents a continuum of progress. At the end of Year Two, there are teachers and administrators in pilot schools and in the SCDE who are thinking about



leadership development in different ways and making shifts according to what is needed to build out models for the state to consider in 2018-2019.

How is Collective Leadership Developing?

In the summer of 2017, SCDE, in partnership with CTQ, invited applications from schools interested in pursuing and developing collective leadership. The applications included questions about school climate, conditions, leadership, and orientation toward improvement. The applications were evaluated based on prospects for collective leadership development to build a cohort representative of a broad range of readiness. Although the initial plan was for there to be only ten pilot schools, due to broad-based interest across the state, 12 schools were selected. The schools are from all over South Carolina representing the diverse challenges and opportunities facing the state. Through an improvement process that has required unblinking honesty through data collection, site visits, book study, and self-reflection, the 12 schools have launched their work together in order to inform work that moves forward across the state. The pilot participants for Year 1 were:

Aiken Middle School
Clearwater Elementary School
Robert Anderson Middle School
Mary Ford Elementary School
Laing Middle School of Science and Technology
Thomas Cario Middle School
Walker-Gamble Elementary School
South Florence High School
Meadow Glen Middle School
Lake Marion High School
Blythewood High School
Sims Middle School



Over this first year of the pilot, the 12 schools have built on previous work, developed new work, and learned together. This progress report on the pilot process will highlight the work of the schools—both the obstacles and answers they have found to this point—so that the work thus far can positively influence the work moving forward. This section provides representative profiles of some of the schools. The school profiles represent a range of collective leadership readiness with lessons that can be learned from all three. The final section will apply what has been learned from this work to the upcoming year. If leadership is about the work, then progress reports like this are vital for leadership development because they allow opportunity for course correction and improvement.

The Cohort

A survey was administered in April 2018 to determine how schools were progressing. Of 829 possible respondents, 627 responded (76 percent). School response rates ranged from 50 percent to 96 percent (See Appendix A). The survey included several items directly related to SCDE initiatives:

- When asked if CLI “can help with the implementation of the 4.0 Rubric,” 31 percent of respondents “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed.”
- When asked if CLI “can help with preparing students in alignment with the Profile of the South Carolina graduate,” 46 percent of respondents “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” (See Appendix B).

The table below represents the responses based on collective leadership constructs as operationalized in the survey. The items are highly reliable ($\alpha=.78$ to $\alpha=.98$ for the eight constructs) and are reported by construct for concision. While the average responses were generally positive, the true value of these data will be in the comparison between the first and second year of the pilot to determine progress. These data are already being used by the cohort and individual schools to determine where communication or implementation need



improvement. Entering the second pilot year, schools will develop confidential assessments based on these data to inform future planning and action.

As a cohort, the pilot schools are most positive about the capacity of teachers to lead ($m = 4.42$) and the direction that their schools are heading. This is evident in their ratings for their schools' orientation toward improvement ($M = 4.17$) and their initial outcomes ($M = 4.04$). Particularly encouraging are the perceptions about initial outcomes. When asked to respond to probes like, "Collectively, the teachers and administrator(s) at this school can solve most any problem, no matter how difficult" and "If I try really hard, I can make progress with even the most difficult and unmotivated students" teachers and administrators were overwhelmingly positive.

The cohort was least positive about their ability to influence others—particularly those beyond their schools. The probes that comprise constructive organizational politics ask respondents to rate their influence with other teachers and administrators within and beyond their buildings from "no influence" to a "great deal of influence." Not surprisingly, at this point in the process most respondents did not believe that their influence was particularly extensive, especially beyond the school building. This construct is an excellent example of an antecedent condition that should improve over time as collective leadership develops. In future data collection, improvement should be expected.

Table 1: Collective Leadership Development by Construct

Year	Year	Average Response
Vision and Strategy (3 probes)	2018	3.97
	($n=511$)	
<i>5-point scale: "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree"</i> <i>("Unsure" accounted for 7-12% of responses in 2018)</i>		
Supportive Administration (10 probes)	2018	3.80



Year	Year	Average Response
	(n=387)	
5-point scales: “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” and “Not at All” to “To a Great Extent” (“Unsure” accounted for 7-38% of responses in 2018)		
Adequate Resources: Initial Teacher Leadership Capacity (3 probes)	2018	4.42
	(n=600)	
5-point scale: “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”		
Enabling Work Structures (3 probes)	2018	3.53
	(n=566)	
5-point scale: “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”		
Supportive Social Norms and Working Relationships (6 probes)	2018	3.50
	(n=566)	
5-point scale: “Changed a lot for the worse” to “Changed a lot for the better”		
Constructive Organizational Politics (4 probes)	2018	2.08
	(n=554)	
5-point scale: “No Influence” to “A Great Deal”		



Year	Year	Average Response
School Orientation Toward Improvement (7 probes)	2018	4.17
	(n=595)	

5-point scale: “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”

Initial Outcomes (5 probes)	2018	4.04
	(n=601)	

5-point scale: “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”

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