

South Carolina Collective Leadership Initiative 2023 Summary Results: Year 6



Executive Summary

The South Carolina Collective Leadership Initiative (CLI), a partnership between the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and Mira Education (formerly Center for Teaching Quality/CTQ), engages teams of leaders within schools to lead changes that help students meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. A two-year pilot (2017–19) assisted SCDE in constructing scalable supports for other schools seeking to respond to equity and improvement challenges by engaging teachers and administrators as leaders of effective innovation. A total of 10 schools completed the pilot, with districtwide expansion in one Local Education Agency (LEA). This report summarizes findings at the close of year six. Five cohorts compose the current CLI initiative. This study reports data from 27 schools:

- Cohort 1 (2017–2022): 4 schools
- Cohort 2 (2019–2022): 3 schools
- Cohort 3 (2020–2021): 5 schools
- Cohort 4 (2021–2022): 5 schools
- Cohort 5 (2022–2023): 10 schools

Over the course of the past five academic years, monthly data collection about schools' identified adaptive goals as well as the quality of supports through virtual and in-person meetings across the participating schools served to triangulate findings from the survey around the seven conditions that support collective leadership development. This year, we analyzed data across the annual May Collective Leadership Survey and the Collective Educator Efficacy Survey that is administered three times per year.

Survey response rates dropped this year but still remained high enough to be representative across school sites with 603 of a possible 1200 respondents for a response rate of 50 percent. This rate is a drop from previous years when rates ranged from 75-59 percent. Of the respondents, 54 percent served elementary students, 23 percent served middle school students, 18 percent served high school students, and 6 percent served PreK-12 and had a wide range of experience in their respective buildings with 25 percent of respondents serving in their third-fifth year.

Data collection occurred in May 2023. **Across all seven conditions and initial outcomes, average responses were higher than 2022.** The largest increase was in “shared vision and strategy” with slight increases in the other six conditions.



Below are six key findings:

- 1) **Collective leadership seems to be a stabilizing factor in respondents' generally positive sentiments about each of the seven conditions. This also holds true for Cohort 1 and 2 schools that have been involved in CLI for several years.** In 2023, responses were remarkably consistent with 2020, 2021, and 2022 results maintaining score levels across 27 schools that completed the May 2023 Collective Leadership Survey. When averaged, no condition changed by more than 0.31 from 2021-2022. This is noteworthy given the cascading turbulence across a wide range of contexts.
- 2) **There is a strong correlation between collective leadership and collective educator efficacy. This is particularly promising as John Hattie and colleagues (2018) have found collective teacher efficacy to be the most influential factor on student outcomes.** Similar to 2020, 2021, and 2022 educators remained extremely confident in their ability to influence student learning. This confidence was evident in the "initial outcomes" items. This strong sense of collective efficacy is confirmed by the three iterations of the Collective Educator Efficacy survey that was administered in December 2022, February 2023, and April 2023. For the first time this year, we were able to measure the correlation between the May collective educator efficacy survey and the Collective Leadership Survey administered in the same time frame for 23 schools with unique identifiers for each respondent. **The correlation between collective leadership and collective educator efficacy is strong (.69) and is moderate to strong for all seven conditions.** Collective leadership seems to be a stabilizing factor in respondents' generally positive sentiments about each of the seven conditions.
- 3) **Scale-up through districtwide investment in the approach yields consistent results. Clarendon County Schools demonstrated strength across all seven conditions and schools as a full district participating in CLI.** Considering that the district has undergone extreme change through multiple consolidations in the past few years, this result strongly suggests that the practice of collective leadership serves as a buffer against stresses on school-based staff as well as an accelerator of positive shifts and improvement within districts. A separate report designed for Clarendon breaks these results down further.
- 4) **One condition that had declined significantly from 2018 to 2022 is "adequate resources," which rebounded a bit in 2023 (e.g., financial resources, human resources, and facilities).** This offers further evidence of the value of collective leadership to continue improvement despite adverse external conditions. However, the lack of resources and capacity continue to strain teachers who consistently cited lack of time and resources as the biggest obstacle to collective leadership on an open-ended survey response.
- 5) **Since 2018, there has been a significant increase in the number of respondents who consider themselves leaders in their schools from 45 percent in 2018 to 77 percent in 2023.** Even though the sample of schools has changed, this is an encouraging trend and an intended outcome of the CLI, suggesting that collective leadership practice can support a sense of growing mastery among educators as well as growth in school and district leadership pipelines.
- 6) **Each school in Cohort 4 demonstrated significant growth on their overall collective leadership score after two years of support through CLI.** The average score for schools in Cohort 4 rose from 30.81 to 34.09. The consistency across the schools and the magnitude are indicative of improving perceptions of collective leadership.

