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# Pathway to Advanced Performance: An Evaluation of the Missouri Leadership Development System

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## Summary of the Study and Findings

This report presents learnings from the perspectives of educators across the state about the implementation of the Missouri Leadership Development System (MLDS). The evaluation was conducted by the Region 12 Comprehensive Center (R12CC), funded under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Principals and superintendents believe MLDS effectively develops school leaders and successfully addresses challenges arising from COVID-19. Classroom teachers also indicate their principals' participation in MLDS positively affects the school and their classroom instruction. Findings from the study support the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in making evidence-based refinements to the program.

## Introduction and Context

The purpose of MLDS is “to develop and support effective school leaders” (DESE, 2019b, p. 2). It is “one of the nation’s most comprehensive statewide principal development initiatives” (Duffrin, 2022). The program is aligned to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (see Appendix A for the program’s organizational structure).

In 2021–22, MLDS supported the professional growth of 1,192 school leaders. The 1,152 participants from 954 schools in 356 districts, for whom detailed information is available, included 614 principals (53%), 417 assistant principals (36%), and 121 other educators (11%).<sup>1</sup>

MLDS supports principals from Aspiring (pre-certificated), to Emerging (initial career entry), through Developing (practicing), and ultimately to Transformational (highest level). It provides three layers of training and support: leadership content learning, implementation support through mentors and specialists, and regional and state networking (see Appendices A and B).

**Literature Review.** MLDS is well grounded in scientific research. Rigorous studies have consistently shown effective principal leadership contributes to student achievement (Branch et al., 2013; Gates et al., 2019; Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis et al., 2010; Nunnery et al., 2011). Given the key role principals play in school success, Levin and Bradley (2019) found inadequate professional development and support a main reason principals leave the profession. By providing principals with effective leadership development and support, programs akin to MLDS improve principal retention and student learning (Gates et al., 2019; Jacob et al., 2015).

The remainder of this report describes the research questions and methodology, discusses findings and key issues, and presents recommendations. Tables and figures are included in the appendices.

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<sup>1</sup> Raw data were shared via email correspondence from state officials on March 21, 2022. R12CC conducted the calculations. The number of schools was identified by the number of unique school building names, and the number of LEAs by the number of unique county district codes.

## Research Questions

The following overarching research questions (RQs) guide this study.

- » RQ1: What are the respective perceptions of principals, superintendents, and specialists<sup>2</sup> about MLDS?
- » RQ2: How do principals' perceptions of MLDS differ?
- » RQ3: What are classroom teachers' perceptions of their principals' participation in MLDS?
- » RQ4: How do classroom teachers' perceptions differ?

RQ1 has a number of sub-questions, including (a) overall perceptions, (b) fidelity of implementation, (c) professional development, (d) micro-credentials, (e) benefits and value, (f) impacts, (g) enhancing factors, and (h) emerging issues. RQ2 compares principals' responses by Regional Professional Development Center (RPDC), school status (i.e., Comprehensive Support and Improvement: CSI), community type, race/ethnicity, and years of experience with MLDS. RQ3 explores teachers' perceived impacts of MLDS on principals' support and leadership practices, on their schools, and on classroom teachers. RQ4 compares teachers' responses by RPDC, school level, race/ethnicity, years of experience with MLDS principal, and teaching experience.

## Methodology

For this evaluation, R12CC utilized a mixed-methods approach by collecting multiple sources of data from March to June 2022. The data sources include (a) statewide surveys of MLDS principals, superintendents, and specialists; (b) survey of classroom teachers; (c) interviews with MLDS principals, superintendents, and specialists; (d) fall 2021 and spring 2022 MLDS participant satisfaction surveys administered by DESE; and (e) a review of MLDS documents and videos.

**Principal, Superintendent, and Specialist Surveys.** R12CC, in partnership with DESE, developed and administered three web-based, anonymous surveys for all MLDS principals, superintendents, and specialists. The surveys were launched on March 28 and closed on April 29, 2022.

The principal survey included 44 Likert-scale questions (e.g., impacts of MLDS) and six open-ended questions (e.g., unique features) for current MLDS principals, and seven open-ended questions (e.g., why did the participant exit from the program) for previous MLDS principals. The superintendent and specialist surveys included a similar set of Likert-scale and open-ended questions (see Table 1 for the response rates and Tables 2, 3, and 4 for the characteristics of survey respondents).

Responses to the principal survey are very similar across the four MLDS-defined career levels (i.e., Aspiring, Emerging, Developing, and Transformational) and the three position groups (i.e., principals, assistant principals, and other educators), therefore, their responses are grouped

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<sup>2</sup> Established by DESE, Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDCs) are designed to serve the professional development needs of public school teachers and leaders in each region. A district may choose to utilize services from any RPDC. RPDCs are supported by MLDS specialists.



together. In discussions of the survey responses that follow, “principals” refer to current MLDS participants at all four career levels, and “superintendents” refer to MLDS superintendents.<sup>3</sup>

The analyses of the principal, superintendent, and specialist survey responses include four years of survey data (i.e., 2018–19 to 2021–22). The most recent data, collected in 2021–22, were examined along with responses from the previous three years (i.e., 2018–19 to 2020–21).

**Classroom Teacher Survey.** The purpose of this survey was to understand teachers’ perceptions of how their principals’ participation in MLDS affects their schools and instruction. The survey was initially made available to 1,926 teachers at 45 schools in 39 districts across the state, identified jointly by DESE, MLDS specialists, and R12CC.<sup>4</sup> This sample methodology enabled the collection of quality data, and engaged teachers from five schools per RPDC region. Launched on March 28 and closed on May 20, 2022, the survey included 28 Likert-scale questions and four open-ended questions. A total of 515 classroom teachers from 35 schools in 31 districts responded to the survey for an overall response rate of 34.2% (see Table 5 for the characteristics of the survey respondents).

The survey analyses included cross tabulations and figures to display findings. R12CC used Mann-Whitney U tests to examine the statistical significance of differences across two groups, and Kruskal-Wallis H Tests across three or more groups. For the written comments, R12CC conducted thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify common themes and key issues.

**Interviews.** R12CC conducted 32 interviews with 15 MLDS principals, 10 superintendents, and seven specialists (see Table 6). The principal and superintendent interviewees, who were not interviewed in 2020–21, were identified by the specialists. The specialist interviewees, a blend of newer and more experienced specialists, were identified by DESE. R12CC conducted thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify common themes and key issues.

**Participant Satisfaction Survey.** R12CC examined the responses to the satisfaction survey which DESE administered in fall 2021 and spring 2022 to MLDS participants. The survey included 11 Likert-scale questions and three open-ended questions.<sup>5</sup>

**Documents and Videos Review.** R12CC reviewed multiple documents related to MLDS such as the guides for participants at all four levels (DESE, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019a), MLDS executive summary (DESE, 2019b), and administrative memos (e.g., DESE, 2021). R12CC also reviewed the mentoring support videos (DESE, n.d.-a) created by DESE.

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<sup>3</sup> This report focuses on the responses of current MLDS principals and superintendents (i.e., principals receiving MLDS training and support and their respective superintendents). Table 12 provides the responses of the specialists.

<sup>4</sup> Of the 45 schools identified, 10 schools (with an estimated 420 classroom teachers) in eight LEAs did not participate in the survey.

<sup>5</sup> Responses to the fall 2021 and spring 2022 participant satisfaction surveys, administered by DESE, are highly consistent with those to the statewide principal survey conducted by R12CC.

**Limitations of the Study.** This study is based primarily on perceptual data from MLDS principals and superintendents. Due to the anonymous nature of the MLDS evaluation surveys, it is not possible to track educator responses over time. Therefore, the survey data are not strictly longitudinal and the changes observed can be due to different groups of respondents in different years. Also, only a limited number of teachers across the state were invited to take the survey.

In the context of these limitations, consistent trends emerge on MLDS. Findings of this evaluation help DESE continue to make evidence-based policy refinements to the program.

## Findings

### RQ1-A: Overall Perceptions of MLDS

**Principals and superintendents believe the purpose of MLDS is clear and they are well-informed about the program. They also see a connection, through MLDS, between developing leadership skills and improving student learning.**

As Figure 1 shows, nearly all principals agreed the purpose of MLDS is clear (97–98%), they know where to get information about the program (96–97%), and they receive information about MLDS on a regular basis (94–97%). Principals also believed the program helps them to see a connection between developing their leadership skills and improving student learning (96–97%). The majority of superintendents shared these perspectives (see Figure 2).

**Principals agreed they receive support from their district and RPDC when applying learnings from MLDS at their school. Higher percentages of superintendents indicated MLDS-related discussions with their principal(s) have influenced districtwide programs and practices.**



*“There is a huge connection between MLDS and what I want instructionally in the district.”*

-Superintendent

As Figure 3 shows, across the four years, most principals agreed that when applying what they have learned from MLDS at their school, they receive support from their RPDC (88–93%) and from their district (88–92%), with which most superintendents concurred (90–95%). Higher percentages of superintendents (66%, 78%, 75%, and 86%, respectively, across the four years) believed MLDS-related discussions with their principal(s) have influenced districtwide programs and practices.

*There is a huge connection between MLDS and what I want instructionally in the district. It brings all the pieces together, especially time management and connections with teachers and students.*

-Superintendent

## RQ1-B: Fidelity of Implementation of MLDS

### Principals and superintendents believed MLDS is being implemented with fidelity.

As Figure 4 shows, principals agreed MLDS provides an appropriate level of support for building their leadership capacity (93–98%), MLDS methods are helpful (93–99%), and they are regularly applying what they learn from MLDS to their real-life leadership practices (90–95%). The positive perceptions were elaborated upon in interviews and survey comments.



*“MLDS is the best program I have been in for professional development at any level.”*

-Superintendent

*MLDS is very consistent in delivering its components as designed. My assistant principal is one year behind me and learning the same materials as I did. It is good quality research-based learning that gives us great information to apply.*

-Principal

*MLDS is the best program I have been in for professional development at any level. It is well designed to do what it intends to.*

-Superintendent

*My principal tries different things that I know she has learned through the program. She also shares different and new ideas with her staff for us to try as well.*

-Classroom Teacher

Figure 4 also shows a general pattern in which the percentage of principals who agreed with the survey prompts remains high in 2018–19 and 2019–20, decreases in 2020–21 amidst COVID-19, and rebounds in 2021–22. This pattern can be observed in other survey responses over the years.

Principals and specialists identified a range of unique features of MLDS (e.g., networking, peer collaboration, hands-on learning). These characteristics, individually and collectively, are perceived to contribute to the effectiveness of the program.

*One of the most unique aspects of MLDS is having a cohort of administrators to learn with and share ideas with. We work on the treatments together and then share how those worked when we put them into practice at our own buildings.*

-Principal

*MLDS is a system of learning and support. The content directly supports what school leaders do. We encourage leaders to apply the learning experiences/treatments in hopes leaders will be prepared to address whatever needs their school may experience. Leaders come together to learn, network, and share.*

-Specialist



## RQ1-C: MLDS Professional Development

### Principals and superintendents were highly positive about MLDS professional development.

Nearly all principals (98–100%) agreed MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices (see Figure 5). They also indicate the professional development content (96–100%) and training materials (95–98%) are relevant to their needs. In interviews, principals and superintendents reinforce these perspectives.

*I am a more effective leader because of MLDS. The focus of each session is relevant to where I am as a leader. The topics and learning [are] valued and I am able to apply them immediately while continuing to grow.*

-Principal

*The MLDS training materials are top-notch. My principals get a lot of books and do deep dives. There is no doubt the materials are professional and of high quality.*

-Superintendent

As Figure 6 shows, principals also indicated they intentionally apply what they learn from MLDS to strengthen their leadership practices (95–98%), and they believed MLDS trainings promote a common leadership vocabulary in the state (92–96%).

*I bring back things I learn from MLDS and immediately apply them to what I am trying to do in my building. I apply the information to situations I deal with regularly.*

-Principal

*Our principal uses the strategies that he learns in MLDS on a daily basis.*

-Classroom Teacher



*"I am a more effective leader because of MLDS."*

-Principal

Networking is a key feature of MLDS (Slotnik & Liang, 2019; Liang & Slotnik, 2020, 2021). As Figure 6 shows, the percentage of principals who agreed they network with other principals, remained at a high level, decreasing from 94% in 2018–19 to 92% in 2019–20, and to 84% in 2020–21, and then

increased to 89% in 2021–22. Due to COVID-19, more of the networking was remote in 2019–20 and 2020–21; in 2021–22, there was a return to in-person networking.

*Resources and support from MLDS never stop. We used a virtual platform but now we are transitioning to in-person.*

-Superintendent

*Last year it was all virtual, which was difficult for so many participants. This year we were all face-to-face and we were able to do the coaching labs.*

-Principal

*OLE [Outdoor Leadership Experience] was an amazing experience and I am glad that I was able to go this year since it was canceled last year due to COVID. It was truly a life changing experience that provided a family of leaders for me to network with.*

-Principal

## RQ1-D: MLDS Micro-Credentials

**The majority of principals and superintendents indicated they are aware principals can upgrade their administrator certificate by completing MLDS micro-credentials. They believed completing MLDS micro-credentials helps to improve principals' leadership practices.**

As Figure 7 shows, two-thirds of principals (63%) and three-fourths of superintendents (77–80%) indicated they are aware that principals can upgrade their administrator certificate by completing MLDS micro-credentials. Three-fourths of principals (72–74%) and superintendents (75–82%) believed completing MLDS micro-credentials helps to improve principals' leadership practices. In interviews, principals and superintendents reinforced these findings.

*I love micro-credentials...Anytime you can get credentials, it makes you a better professional.*

-Superintendent

*Yes, I am aware. I cannot say what [the] impact will be on leadership practices but it is an effective way to renew your certificate without returning to college.*

-Principal

All specialists indicated they were aware principals can upgrade their administrator certificate by completing MLDS micro-credentials. They were divided on the impact of micro-credentials; while 52% of specialists in 2021–22 believe MLDS micro-credentials are helpful, 48% were undecided.

*MLDS micro-credentials are beneficial for school leaders...If they do not have advanced degrees, this is a great offer to complete certification...the micro-credentials are cost effective and related to their role.*

-Specialist

*I don't see the value of micro-credentials.*

-Specialist

## RQ1-E: Benefits and Value of MLDS

### Principals and superintendents were highly positive about the benefits and value of MLDS.

As Figure 8 shows, principals believed MLDS provides opportunities for professional growth (96–99%) and promotes peer collaboration (94–98%). The percentage of principals who agreed MLDS provides customized support begins at 92% in 2018–19, decreases slightly to 91% in 2019–20, to 87% in 2020–21, and increases to 88% in 2021–22.

*MLDS is always looking at different ways to engage our leaders. The unique part is that they customize to the needs. They look at buildings and identify the big rocks they are turning over so principals can reach their goals in their buildings.*

-Superintendent

Figure 10 shows principals also agreed MLDS strengthens their instructional leadership practices (95–98%) and makes them better leaders (95–97%).

Consistent with principals' perceptions, superintendents (86–99%) believed their principals' participation in MLDS is beneficial and valuable (see Figures 9 and 10). In interviews and survey comments, respondents reinforced these findings.

*MLDS has been and continues to be an extremely valuable program for my principals. I wish it had been available for me to utilize when I became a principal.*

-Superintendent

*I have found the MLDS program extremely valuable. I always look forward to my time at MLDS meetings and I hope to continue with the program for many years!*

-Principal

*This experience is valuable to my principal. She speaks highly of her time in MLDS.*

-Classroom Teacher

*MLDS is critically important for principals to gain the knowledge and experiences needed to be highly effective and to remain in their role in an ever-changing society.*

-Specialist

## RQ1-F: Multiple Impacts of MLDS

**Across the four years, principals and superintendents believed MLDS has a positive impact on principals' instructional leadership, classroom instruction, and student achievement. They credited MLDS with supporting the growth and retention of school leaders in Missouri.**



*“MLDS is always looking at different ways to engage our leaders.”*

-Superintendent

## Impacts of MLDS on Instructional Leadership and Classroom Instruction

As Figure 11 shows, nearly all principals believed MLDS enhances their ability to identify (93–96%) and describe (93–95%) different levels of quality of instruction, provide teachers with constructive feedback (96–98%), and support teachers to improve instruction (93–96%). Most superintendents (88–96%) agreed and shared these perspectives (see Figure 12).

*MLDS has strengthened my instructional leadership practices by emphasizing the importance of more frequent, specific feedback for teachers and the relationship that builds over time between leader and teacher and the opportunities for collegial conversation around classroom practices.*

-Principal

*I am a stronger instructional leader and understand who I am as a leader on a deeper level than before.*

-Principal

*My principal is more effective in managing student behavior and has better insight on the role. He has improved with feedback from his walk-throughs and class observation because of his practice with peers in the MLDS coaching labs.*

-Superintendent

Principals (88–93%) and superintendents (83–93%) believed MLDS increases principals' ability to observe teachers, address the social-emotional learning needs of teachers and students, and engage school faculty in discussions about pedagogy (see Figure 13). They also credited MLDS with improving school climate and culture and changing the mindset of principals.

*As a result of my [participation] in MLDS, I have been able to positively impact the climate and culture of my building, bring instructional strategies and relevant professional development to my team and staff, and I have been able to work through some difficult situations with the support of the specialists and my mentor.*

-Principal

*I brought our entire building/program into one strong unit. Before, they were separate departments but now we are one and we are stronger together!*

-Principal

*MLDS provides an opportunity to shift from the management focus to the instructional support side of being a principal. In-person meetings allow our principals to come together away from their buildings to really focus on the aspects of instructional leadership and collaborative professional learning that they would not otherwise have the opportunity to engage with.*

-Superintendent



*“MLDS has helped me to give better feedback to my teachers.”*

-Principal

**As a result of their participation in MLDS, principals reported becoming more intentional and confident in their leadership practices.** These specific changes and accomplishments included conducting more frequent observations, providing teachers with more specific and constructive feedback, and having more meaningful conversations. Principals also reported having more confidence in conducting evaluations and having difficult conversations.

*MLDS has helped me to give better feedback to my teachers. I have used the pieces on how to give feedback very intentionally with my teaching staff.*

-Principal

*My principal has provided meaningful feedback to advance my teaching practices.*

-Classroom Teacher

*My principal provides clear and specific feedback after an observation. He always brings new ideas to the table that I wouldn't have thought about.*

-Classroom Teacher

*My MLDS principal has become more willing to engage in difficult conversations with teachers regarding pedagogy.*

-Superintendent

## Impacts of MLDS on Student Achievement

Across the four years, nearly all principals (89–93%) believed MLDS contributes to improved student achievement at their school (see Figure 14), and most superintendents (73–92%) agreed (see Figure 15). Interviewees elaborated on their perceptions of MLDS' contribution to student learning.

*Due to MLDS, I have been able to continue to improve the climate and culture at my school. My school consistently scores above state average on the MAP test.*

-Principal

*MLDS absolutely contributes to student learning. As adults' practices improve, it will have an impact on the students. There is a correlation between the two concepts.*

-Superintendent



## Impacts of MLDS on School Leader Growth and Retention

As Figure 14 shows, nearly all principals (96–98%) agreed MLDS supports the growth of school leaders in the state. In addition, **nine out of ten principals (88–92%) across the four years indicated MLDS makes them more likely to stay as school leaders in Missouri.** Superintendents also agreed MLDS supports the growth (95–97%) and retention (80–92%) of school leaders (see Figure 15). In interviews, principals and superintendents reinforced these findings.



*“MLDS absolutely helps to retain school leaders.”*

-Superintendent

*Retention often does not happen because of burnout, but the 15–20 of us feel we have a support group. We were paired across the state and have stayed in touch. That effort toward retention is priceless. A lot of times we feel like we are on an island and now we have people to support us.*

-Principal

*MLDS absolutely helps to retain school leaders. You can reach out comfortably about problems and difficulties. You build relationships which reduces the stress.*

-Superintendent

DESE’s analysis of the 2019–20 to 2021–22 data suggests MLDS has a positive impact on principal retention. Over this three-year period, Missouri principals participating in MLDS were retained at a rate 20 percentage points higher (98%) than non-participating principals (78%) (DESE, 2022).

## RQ1–G: Enhancing Factors

**Principals and superintendents highlighted multiple factors that make the program effective, particularly opportunities for networking and collaboration, hands-on and relevant learning experiences, focus on instruction, and research-based strategies.** These factors have been consistently identified in previous years’ interviews and survey comments (Slotnik & Liang, 2019; Liang & Slotnik, 2020, 2021).

*What makes MLDS most effective to me are the actual ideas and strategies that I can put into practice in my school.*

-Principal

*MLDS accelerated the maturation of my principal’s leadership process. This is very helpful because it gave my principal peers to lean on and bounce ideas off of. MLDS has helped my principal to go from a developing leader to an effective leader.*

-Superintendent

**Principals valued the customization of MLDS support which accommodates local contexts and individual needs.**

*The cohort of leaders that I have met, as well as the personalized level of our regional leaders, allows the meetings to be more tailored to fit the needs of being an administrator in a rural district school.*

-Principal

*The practice and engagement with leaders in similar positions and on similar campuses as mine are making the program effective.*

-Principal

**Despite the ongoing pandemic, MLDS continued to provide principals with effective support.**

As Figure 16 shows, principals indicated in both 2020–21 and 2021–22 that despite COVID-19, MLDS helped them to remain focused on instruction and student learning (90–93%). Principals also

believed MLDS supports them to address the social and emotional needs of students and teachers (83%), and helps teachers and students to advance learning within different environments (81–84%).



*“Even in the midst of a pandemic I learned a lot from this program.”*

-Principal

*MLDS is the perfect support system to help us get through the worst of the worst through the pandemic. It is invaluable to all administrators.*

-Superintendent

*As a result of participation in MLDS, my principal reasserts focus on student learning amid the disruptions of the pandemic.*

-Superintendent

*We did an entire training on social-emotional learning...It was good to hear other leaders speak on what they have experienced and ideas they have to help those situations. It was a good focus for the group this year.*

-Principal

*Our school leaders are focusing on instruction when there are lots of distractions due to COVID. They are LEADING and staying focused on what is best for kids!*

-Specialist

Most principals also believed MLDS continues to engage them with relevant and applicable learning activities (86–93%) through a blend of in-person and remote training formats (85–86%), and through providing research-based practices and strategies (88–93%).

*Even in the midst of a pandemic I learned a lot from this program. So while virtual may make things difficult, it was still effective.*

-Principal

*There are some treatments that are perhaps less germane (at the moment) because of the pandemic. We have tended to focus on those treatments that were most important for an in-person, hybrid, or virtual school setting so that the learning could be immediately applicable to the school setting.*

-Specialist

Superintendents (70–89% in 2020–21 and 88–95% in 2021–22) largely shared the perspectives of principals on the program’s support to school leaders during COVID-19 (see Figure 17).

**The support from MLDS specialists and mentors was highly valued.** As Figures 18 and 19 show, nearly all principals believed specialists in their RPDC (92–96%) and their mentors (91–92%) understand schools like theirs, help them to apply MLDS content to practical situations, and effectively support them. Superintendents also agreed with the survey prompts related to supports from specialists (88–93%) and mentors (87–88%).

*MLDS is an effective program because of the effectiveness of the mentors. They provide extremely valuable advice and enable leaders to practice leadership strategies in real world scenarios.*

-Principal

*MLDS is successful because the specialists foster collaboration through different media (e.g., in-person, text message, email). The group meetings are always well-planned and have great learning activities that are relevant to current events in education.*

-Principal

**Interviewees highlighted the pivotal role that superintendents play in supporting principals’ participation in MLDS.** When superintendents have professional experiences with the program, either as supervisors of MLDS principals or as participants in MLDS at earlier stages of their career, they have a better understanding of the program’s benefits and value.

*I [participated in] the program. I know it helped me and there is a direct benefit. I make my principal take the time and go to the program.*

-Superintendent

*It is a big concern of mine that if the superintendent does not understand, the district system will not change. If principals [participate in] MLDS, it is because their superintendent understands. The superintendent role is unique. MLDS should recognize the superintendent as the instructional leader.*

-Superintendent

To get more superintendents with similar professional learning experiences on board, DESE crafted competencies for superintendents which were aligned to the competencies for principals. In addition, DESE piloted in 2021–22 executive coaching for superintendents, and revised the rules for superintendent certification (Duffrin, 2022).

## RQ1–H: Emerging Issues in the Midst of the Pandemic

**Interviewees indicated there should be stronger communication between and alignment of support from MLDS and the districts.** By being on the same page, both the program and districts can be more effective in supporting principals.

*There should be more communications between MLDS and the Central Office. The information should be specific and relevant about what my principals are learning.*

-Superintendent

*The district is not as connected with the system [MLDS] to understand what we are learning and the strides we made as leaders.*

-Principal

*MLDS should ensure that the districts are supporting what MLDS is teaching and all of us are on the same page.*

-Principal

**Principals and superintendents recommended DESE further promote the MLDS program.**

*I just happened to stumble upon the MLDS program in my MAESP magazine and then reached out to someone in the program. Not many of my colleagues have heard about it. It is a wonderful opportunity and more people should know about it!*

-Principal

*They [MLDS leadership] should continue the path they are on. MLDS is a fairly new program, about four years. They should spread the word, what it is and how it works.*

-Superintendent

While some principals appreciated the flexibility in scheduling of virtual meetings and not having to be away from their building, **many principals and superintendents indicated virtual meetings and trainings were necessitated by COVID-19. They preferred more in-person meetings and flexible participation formats with both virtual and in-person options.**

*COVID had a negative impact because I do not relate well to virtual learning. In-person sessions are extremely beneficial.*

-Principal

*In virtual meetings, the content is the same but the experience is not as rich. With in-person meetings, there are more opportunities for natural discussions.*

-Superintendent

*My assistant principal and I are both in MLDS and sometimes we cannot both be gone from the building. It would be nice to attend the same meeting with one of us in-person and one of us attending virtually.*

-Principal

Some principals and superintendents also hoped MLDS can hold a larger number of meetings that maintain the emphasis on practical and hands-on learning activities.

*There are too few meetings. I missed two meetings this year due to factors outside of my control, which meant I missed half of the learning. I would prefer more meetings with shorter durations. Instead of four full days, perhaps five or six half days.*

-Principal

*MLDS should meet at least one more time in the fall and once more in the spring.*

-Superintendent

*I enjoyed the school visits and the coaching labs. If it is practical to get out in the field more often, it could enhance the experience.*

-Principal

Principals and superintendents consistently indicated MLDS training content and materials are highly relevant. In this context, **a number of interviewees hoped MLDS trainings can provide learning materials related to emerging issues (e.g., addressing the social and emotional needs of students and staff).**

*Today's students have evolved. They are very different since COVID. We are not equipped, and neither are the teachers, to meet their social and emotional needs. This component needs to be added to MLDS.*

-Principal

*My principals struggle with having tough conversations and oftentimes opt for avoidance. I have observed improvement but there is still plenty of room to grow.*

-Superintendent

*I would like to see us update resource materials and expand instructional leadership.*

-Specialist



Principals, superintendents, and specialists generally highlighted the mentoring component as a key factor contributing to the effectiveness of MLDS. **A few principals, though, hoped their mentors can better understand the expectations for their positions and be more responsive.**

*The only part I can see as impeding the effectiveness of MLDS is the mentorship. My original mentor struggled to make contact or be available. I would just suggest that mentors understand the time commitment and overall expectations of the role.*

-Principal

*Last year, my mentor only reached out one time at the beginning of the year and I never heard another word after that. My mentor this year was consistent the first part of the school year, but I have not heard from [them] the second part of the year.*

-Principal

A concern that some interviewees raised is connected to an area of MLDS success. To accommodate the professional growth needs of an increasing number of MLDS principals, DESE successfully tripled the number of specialists from nine in 2016–17 to 27 at present. As the number of specialists expands, some interviewees emphasized **it is important to ensure the consistency of high quality services that specialists provide to principals.**

*Specialists who have joined the team in the last few years have not had the intense training that the original team had...This will impede the program if we don't tighten things up. The system will not stay consistent if we are not careful about supporting our new/most recent specialists.*

-Specialist

*Some new specialists are still on a learning curve before they become confident to serve.*

-Superintendent

## RQ2: Comparisons of Principals' Perceptions

**Principals in all RPDC regions had very positive perceptions of MLDS. The responses of principals in the South Central region were the most positive.** This finding, as Table 7 shows, is consistent with Slotnik and Liang (2019) and Liang and Slotnik (2020, 2021).

Responses to some survey items help to explain the perceptions of the two groupings of principals by RPDC region. Although principals in all RPDC regions were highly positive about MLDS, higher percentages of principals in the South Central region strongly agreed that MLDS increases their ability to observe teachers (84% vs. 53%), they regularly apply their MLDS learnings at their school (73% vs. 48%), and they receive support from their RPDC (78% vs. 51%).

As Table 8 shows, **principals in CSI and Non-CSI schools were both highly positive about MLDS and the responses of Non-CSI principals were generally more positive.** As an example, both CSI principals (97%) and Non-CSI principals (97%) strongly agreed/agreed that MLDS strengthens their instructional leadership practices. The percentage of principals who strongly agreed with this survey prompt, however, is higher for Non-CSI principals (64%) than for CSI principals (47%).

Table 9 shows **the perceptions of principals in city, suburban, and rural areas were similar.** As an example, principals in all three types of communities believed MLDS strengthens their instructional leadership practices (97% for cities, 96% for suburbs, and 97% for rural areas).

As reflected in Table 10, **principals, regardless of race/ethnicity, were highly positive about MLDS.** As an example, 98% of white principals and 100% of principals of other race/ethnicity believed MLDS provides opportunities for them to grow as professionals.

Table 11 shows that **the longer principals participate in MLDS, the more positive their perceptions are.** As an example, the percentage of principals who believed MLDS increases their ability to support teachers to improve instruction increased from 88% for one year of participation, to 91% for two years, to 96% for three years, and to 100% for four or more years. This finding is consistent with Liang and Slotnik (2021).

### RQ3: Classroom Teachers' Perceptions of MLDS

The teacher survey explored teachers' perceptions of how their principals' participation in MLDS affects the school and their classroom instruction. Five hundred and fifteen classroom teachers from 35 schools in 31 districts took the survey and their responses are presented in Table 13.



*"I loved the enthusiasm my principal would show when sharing ideas that came from MLDS."*

-Classroom Teacher

**Teachers highlighted the usefulness, quality, and relevance of the professional development they receive from their principals.** Most teachers believed their principals' professional development offerings are useful (85%), of high quality (85%), relevant (84%), and focus on research-

based instructional practices (84%). Teachers also agreed the offerings are differentiated to their instructional needs (72%) and help them use assessment data to plan instruction (74%).

Teachers elaborated on these positive perceptions in survey comments.

*My principal always shares her learnings and gets our feedback. Most, if not all, of her trainings are useful and easily implemented into our school culture.*

-Classroom Teacher

*The trainings I received this year from my principal helped me to create more student-led conversations around learning.*

-Classroom Teacher

Also, **teachers were highly positive about their principals' instructional leadership practices which they credit to participation in MLDS.** Teachers (83–91%) believed their principals promote reflection on instructional practices, and encourage instruction-focused dialogue and collaboration among teachers and between teachers and administrators. Teachers also agreed their principals provide constructive feedback (85%), use evaluation results to inform professional development plans (81%), and focus on instruction during COVID-19 (81%).

*I loved the enthusiasm my principal would show when sharing ideas that came from MLDS. When our principal is excited for something, the staff also gets excited. I think MLDS helped our principal see whole picture ideas.*

-Classroom Teacher

*Participation in MLDS allowed for my principal to bring new ideas and services to our school in a way other than a traditional building manager but someone who encourages teachers to seek out leadership roles and improve professional practices.*

-Classroom Teacher

**Teachers believed their principals' leadership practices have positive effects on their schools.** They agreed their principals effectively communicate their schools' core values to all stakeholders (91%) and engage in two-way communication with families and communities (91%). Teachers (84–89%) also indicated their principals build positive relationships between students and the staff, promote a collaborative culture among the staff, encourage teachers to take leadership roles, and promote culturally responsive pedagogy. Three-fourths of teachers agreed their principals recruit staff with diverse backgrounds (75%).

*My principal is very professional and approachable, always willing to help. Our school is better because of her commitment and leadership.*

-Classroom Teacher

*Participation in MLDS gives my principal strategies of how to implement positivity in our school to promote building relationships and providing effective instruction.*

-Classroom Teacher

In addition to improving school climate and culture, **teachers also believed their principals' leadership practices strengthen classroom instruction.** Teachers (87–89%) agreed their principals enhance their capacity to select instructional practices, differentiate instruction, and build the critical thinking skills and address the social-emotional learning needs of all students.

*My instruction is more differentiated. My students are receiving diverse lessons based on their needs and not as a whole group.*

-Classroom Teacher

*I have grown as a teacher when it comes to implementing collaborative learning and more critical thinking practices within my classroom.*

-Classroom Teacher

Teachers also indicated that, with the help of their MLDS-trained principals, they are becoming more confident and reflective, and their teaching is more intentional and consistent. They highlighted improved practices in such areas as classroom engagement and management, and communication with parents and colleagues.

*I am a more competent, confident communicator and educator as a result of my principal's participation in MLDS.*

-Classroom Teacher

*My principal's participation in MLDS promotes positive and impactful changes that resulted in teachers reflecting on instructional practices and improving craft.*

-Classroom Teacher

*I hold high expectations for myself and my students, dedicate extra time to instructional preparation and reflection, and maximize instructional time via effective classroom management and organization. I also enhance my instruction by varying instructional strategies, activities, and assignments.*

-Classroom Teacher

Because of their improved instructional practices, teachers believed they are successful in areas such as building stronger relationships with students and colleagues and increasing students' critical thinking skills. In other words, they are becoming stronger teachers.

*I have accomplished more trust and better relationships with students and staff! I have felt more purpose due to seeing the larger impact made on the students.*

-Classroom Teacher

*Because of my improved instructional practices, my students think critically and can apply their knowledge as well as recall it.*

-Classroom Teacher



*"I am a more competent, confident communicator and educator as a result of my principal's participation in MLDS."*

-Classroom Teacher

**Teachers agreed their principals' leadership contributes to teacher recruitment and retention, and student achievement.** More than three-fourths of teachers believed their principals' leadership encourages teachers to come to (82%) and stay at (78%) their schools, and contributes to improvement in student achievement (89%).

*My principal's participation in MLDS affects our school very positively. My principal is constantly pushing us to be stronger teachers and better leaders. My principal is why teachers stay at our school.*

-Classroom Teacher

*Our school has really improved student learning due to our principals' leadership.*

-Classroom Teacher

## RQ4: Comparisons of Classroom Teachers' Perceptions

**Teachers in all RPDC regions were very positive about their principals' participation in MLDS. The responses of teachers in the Southeast region were the most positive.** Pairwise comparisons, reflected in Table 14, show teachers in the Southeast region form one group, and teachers in the other regions essentially form a second group. As examples, while most teachers in other RPDCs (81–85%) indicated their principals provide constructive feedback, promote a collaborative culture among the staff, and encourage teachers to take leadership roles, nearly all teachers (96–99%) in the Southeast region believed so.

Table 15 shows the perceptions of teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools were similar. As an example, nearly all teachers in elementary (92%), middle (91%), and high (91%) schools agreed their principals promote teacher reflection on instructional practices.

As reflected in Table 16, white teachers and teachers of other race/ethnicity were positive about their principals' participation in MLDS. As examples, most white teachers (84–85%) and teachers of other race/ethnicity (83–85%) agreed the professional development that they receive from their principals are useful, of high quality, and relevant to their work.

Table 17 shows that the longer teachers are with their current MLDS principal, the more positive their perceptions are. As an example, the percentage of teachers who agreed their principals' leadership contributes to improvement in student achievement at their school, while at a high level across their years of experience with their principal, increases from 87% for 0–3 years, to 90% for 4–6 years, and to 93% for 7 or more years.

**Teachers' perceptions were similar across their years of teaching experience** (see Table 18). As an example, nearly all teachers agreed their principal promotes reflection on instructional practices (90% for 0–3 years; 89% for 4–6 years; 92% for 7–9 years; and 92% for 10 or more years).



## Implications and Recommendations

Across the years, principals and superintendents indicate that MLDS effectively develops and supports school leaders. They also believe MLDS is helping principals to address challenges arising from COVID-19. In this context, the following issues and recommendations are intended to help DESE make evidence-based refinements as the program reaches more principals.

### Issue One: Superintendents as Pivotal Partners

#### Overview

When superintendents have professional experience with MLDS, as either supervisors of MLDS principals or as participants in MLDS at earlier stages of their career, they have a better understanding of the instructional benefits and value of their principals' participation in MLDS. Superintendents play a key role in the success of MLDS.

#### Recommended Action

*Deepen the relationships with superintendents.* DESE is implementing multiple innovative approaches (e.g., crafting competencies, providing executive coaching, revising certification rules) to enhance the instructional leadership capacity of superintendents across the state. Having a larger pool of strong district instructional leaders, in turn, can be a linchpin to support the professional growth of school leaders. Building on these efforts, it is essential that MLDS continue to (a) encourage more superintendents to get involved in MLDS; and (b) emphasize the importance of the superintendent-principal relationship in advancing the impact of principals at the school level.

*Continue to enhance communication between MLDS and districts.* Many district and school leaders are not yet aware of this highly-regarded learning opportunity. MLDS should continue to promote the program and help superintendents of non-participating districts understand its instructional benefits and value. Meanwhile, principals and superintendents in participating districts highlight the necessity of stronger communication and alignment of support from the program and their districts. For example, MLDS could convene superintendents at quarterly regional forums. The purpose of the forums should include reviewing (a) the specific MLDS trainings that principals receive; (b) the issues that emerge from the training; (c) the challenges that emerge within the districts; and (d) how MLDS and districts can collaborate in developing principals as impactful school leaders.

### Issue Two: Principal Learning and Recognition

#### Overview

Principals and superintendents believe MLDS effectively develops school leaders. They also identify areas of need that can be addressed as MLDS continues to evolve.

## Recommended Action

*Focus on providing support related to emerging issues.* Principals and superintendents highlight the relevance of MLDS training content and materials, which principals can apply immediately at their school. In this context, some educators hope MLDS trainings can provide learning materials related to emerging issues. MLDS should engage the specialist team to probe how MLDS can assist principals to explore and address issues such as (a) social and emotional learning needs of students; (b) strategies for deepening student learning when there is evidence of loss; (c) innovative approaches for teacher recruitment, induction, and retention; and (d) approaches for enhancing equity as a core part of the school culture.

*Provide more in-person networking and hands-on learning opportunities for principals.* Many principals and superintendents prefer more in-person meetings for MLDS networking. They also recognize the importance of maintaining flexible participation formats so that principals, who need to remain in their buildings, can still learn from the networking sessions. Also, principals and superintendents hope MLDS can hold more meetings that focus on practical learning activities. MLDS should (a) consider returning to in-person networking as the default format; (b) make the trainings available, when feasible, for remote participation; and (c) provide additional hands-on learning opportunities.

*Enhance awareness and understanding of MLDS micro-credentials.* MLDS micro-credentials recognize principals' mastery of critical leadership skills and provide an alternative route to upgrading their administrator certificate. Numerous educators indicate, however, they are either not aware of this learning opportunity or do not see its impact on school leadership. DESE should continue to promote MLDS micro-credentials by focusing on the research base and emphasizing the instructional benefits of the micro-credentials.

## Issue Three: Quality and Consistency of Support from Mentors and Specialists

### Overview

The support from mentors and specialists is valued by both principals and superintendents. With the program expanding its reach, MLDS needs to ensure principals receive high quality support from all mentors and specialists.

### Recommended Action

*Clarify expectations for and support to mentors.* Principals, superintendents, and specialists value the support from mentors to principals. Within this context, some principals indicate their mentors are not as responsive as expected to address their needs. MLDS should therefore ensure that all mentors understand the expectations for their positions. To develop effective mentors, DESE has made available a series of six on-demand videos for mentors. It would be valuable for DESE to understand how mentors are using these videos and what additional resources mentors need from MLDS to increase their effectiveness.

*Review the onboarding process and provide training as needed to specialists.* As MLDS supports the professional growth of more principals and engages more superintendents, the number of specialists is likely to continue to grow. Over the years, the specialist team has provided high quality services to principals. Principals and superintendents will continue to expect effective support in the years ahead. MLDS should convene the specialist team to (a) review the onboarding process for new specialists; (b) set common understanding among all specialists of the expectations for their roles; and (c) identify areas for improvement and provide training as needed to current and incoming specialists.

## Summary

Across the four years from 2018–19 to 2021–22, principals and superintendents indicate MLDS effectively develops school leaders. They also believe the program successfully addresses challenges arising from COVID-19. Classroom teachers also indicate their principals' participation in MLDS positively affects the school and their classroom instruction. Looking ahead, with a continued focus on instruction and emerging issues, MLDS will be in a strong position to support principals both to lead their schools today and address escalating challenges.

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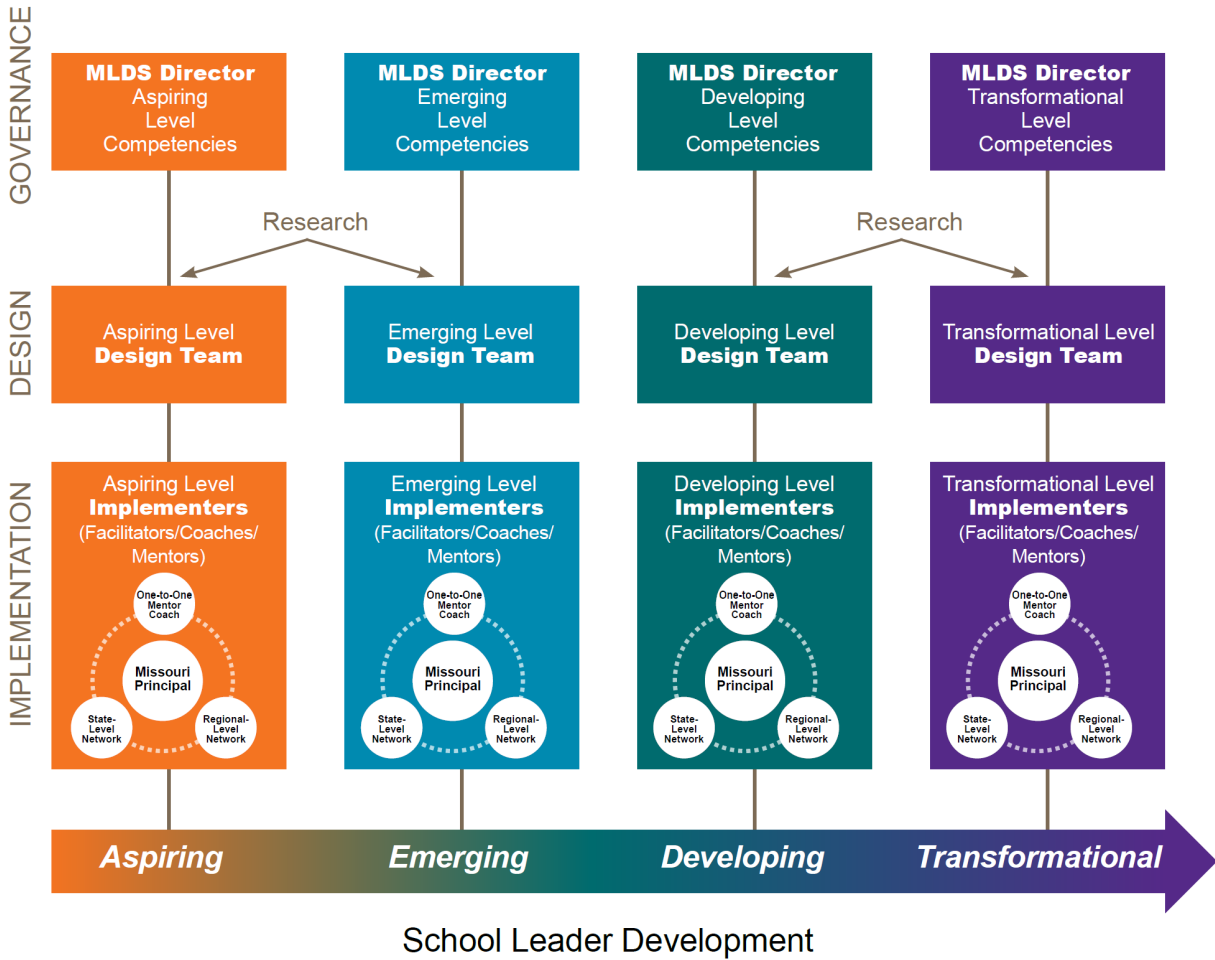
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# Appendix A: MLDS Organizational Chart

## The MLDS Commission

State Educational Agency | Education Administration Programs  
Professional Associations | Regional Service Centers



Source: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2017).



## Appendix B: MLDS Career Levels and Implementation Calendar for Emerging Level Principals

MLDS supports principals at four levels, from Aspiring (pre-certificated), to Emerging (initial career entry), through Developing (practicing), and ultimately to the Transformational Principal.

- » *Aspiring Level* participants. Their learning experiences are designed to engage administrators in preparing for the principalship. This preparation (pre-service) phase results in an administrative certificate. The *Aspiring Level* training became available to participants in 2019–20.
- » *Emerging Level* participants. Their learning experiences are delivered across a two-year timeline to align with the state’s requirement that beginning school leaders be mentored for their first two years. The initial years of practice result in readiness for the next phase. This training became available to participants in 2016–17.
- » *Developing Level* participants. Their learning experiences are designed to engage administrators across a span of several years. It further develops and refines participants’ leadership skills. The training became available to participants in 2018–19.
- » *Transformational Level* participants. Their learning experiences are designed to engage administrators across a span of several years. This phase builds the necessary skills and knowledge of principals to lead schools in ways fully responsive to the learning needs of students. This training became available to participants in 2019–20.

The following graphic provides an illustration of a 2-year implementation calendar for *Emerging* level participants (DESE, 2019a).

LE 1 Critical Firsts | 
 LE 2 Excellent Instruction | 
 LE 3 Understand Self & Others | 
 LE 4 Decision Making | 
 LE 5 Shaping School Culture | 
 LE 6 Making Time

<b>2016</b>	July	Engagement Platform <b>Regional Meeting</b>	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 1</span>	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>	<span style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 3</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>		
	Aug.	Engagement Platform <b>Online Event</b> / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 1</span>	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>	<span style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 3</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>		
	Sept.	Engagement Platform <b>Learning Lab</b>	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>					
	Oct.	Engagement Platform <b>Mentor/Coach</b> / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting Connect/Extend Learning Lab	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 1</span>	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>	<span style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 3</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>		
<b>2017</b>	Nov.	Engagement Platform <b>Regional Meeting</b>	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 4</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>				
	Dec.	Engagement Platform <b>Mentor/Coach</b> / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 1</span>	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>	<span style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 3</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>		
	Feb.	Engagement Platform <b>Regional Meeting</b>	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>	<span style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 3</span>	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 4</span>	<span style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 5</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>	
	Mar.	Engagement Platform <b>Learning Lab</b> Engagement Platform <b>Online Event</b> / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>	<span style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 3</span>	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 4</span>	<span style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 5</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>
	May	Engagement Platform <b>Mentor/Coach</b> / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting Connect/Extend Learning Lab	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>	<span style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 3</span>	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 4</span>	<span style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 5</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>	
	July	Engagement Platform <b>Regional Meeting</b>	<span style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 5</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>				
<b>2018</b>	Aug.	Engagement Platform <b>Learning Lab</b> / Connect/Extend Learning Lab	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>					
	Sept.	Engagement Platform <b>Learning Lab</b> / Connect/Extend Learning Lab	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>					
	Oct.	Engagement Platform <b>Mentor/Coach</b> / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting Connect/Extend Learning Lab	<span style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 5</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>			
	Nov.	Engagement Platform <b>Mentor/Coach</b> / Connect/Extend Learning Lab	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>					
	Dec.	Engagement Platform <b>Mentor/Coach</b> / Connect/Extend Learning Lab	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>					
	Jan.	Engagement Platform <b>Regional Meeting</b>	<span style="background-color: #4B0082; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>	<span style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 3</span>	<span style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 5</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>		
	Mar.	Engagement Platform <b>Online Event</b> / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting Engagement Platform <b>Learning Lab</b>	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>	<span style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 3</span>	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 4</span>	<span style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 5</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>	
	April	Engagement Platform <b>Mentor/Coach</b> / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 2</span>	<span style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 3</span>	<span style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 4</span>	<span style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 5</span>	<span style="background-color: #FF8C00; color: white; padding: 2px;">LE 6</span>	
May								
June								

## Appendix C: Data Sources, Sample, and Methods

### Statewide Surveys of MLDS Principals, Superintendents, and Specialists

The 2022 MLDS principal, superintendent, and specialist surveys were launched on March 28, 2022, using an independent platform. R12CC sent the survey links to DESE and DESE forwarded the survey links to all MLDS principals, superintendents, and specialists. The principal and superintendent associations and some specialists helped to disseminate information about the surveys.

R12CC provided DESE with regular updates on survey participation. To maximize the number of responses, DESE extended the survey window several times and sent multiple reminders. The surveys were closed on April 29, 2022.

The MLDS principal survey included a series of Likert-scale questions for current MLDS principals. The questions focused on overall perceptions; fidelity of implementation; professional development; benefits and value; impact of the program; experience in 2021–22; and support from MLDS specialists and mentors. Six open-ended questions further explored the perceptions of current MLDS principals about the unique features of MLDS; their accomplishments due to participation in MLDS; specific changes to their instructional leadership practices; enhancing factors; impeding factors; and other comments related to the program.

In addition, the principal survey had eight open-ended questions for previous MLDS principals. The questions explored the reasons why they exited from the program; what they like best; what they like least; their accomplishments due to participation in MLDS; specific changes to their instructional leadership practices; whether they would recommend the program; their plan for rejoining the program; and recommendations for program improvement.

The questions for MLDS superintendents, whose districts have principal(s) involved in MLDS, focused on overall perceptions; benefits and value; impact of the program; experience in 2021–22; and support from MLDS specialists and mentors. Five open-ended questions further explored the perceptions of superintendents about their MLDS principals' accomplishments due to participation in MLDS; specific changes to principals' instructional leadership practices; enhancing factors; impeding factors; and other comments related to the program.

The specialist survey included a similar set of Likert-scale and open-ended questions as the MLDS principal survey, with some wording adjustments as appropriate. All specialists surveyed are those who provide training and support through MLDS.

### Classroom Teacher Survey

The administration of the 2022 classroom teacher survey was similar to the implementation of the statewide surveys of MLDS principals, superintendents, and specialists. The teacher survey was launched on March 28, 2022 and closed on May 20, 2022.

As R12CC requested, specialists helped to identify in their region a number of current MLDS principals who meet the following criteria:

- » Having received three or more years of MLDS training;
- » Having been in the school for three or more years as an MLDS principal; and
- » Being willing to have the classroom teachers take the teacher survey.

Specialists sent the classroom teacher survey link, created by R12CC, to the identified MLDS principals, who then forwarded it to the classroom teachers and invited them to participate in the survey. To maximize the number of responses, DESE extended the survey window several times and sent multiple reminders.

## Response Rates for the Surveys

Table 1 shows the response rates for the MLDS principal, superintendent, specialist, and classroom teacher surveys.

*Table 1. Response Rates for the MLDS Principal, Superintendent, Specialist, and Classroom Teacher Surveys, 2021–22*

Respondents	Population	Number of Responses	Response Rate
MLDS Principals	1,192	379	31.8%
Superintendents	348	76	21.8%
Specialists	27	27	100.0%
Classroom Teachers	1,506	515	34.2%

*Note.* “MLDS Principals” refers to current MLDS principals. Seven previous MLDS participants (i.e., those who have participated in the MLDS program) also took the survey and they responded to a number of open-ended questions. The “Superintendents” group includes four Central Office Administrators (i.e., two assistant superintendents and two chief academic officers) who responded to the superintendent survey. Responses to survey questions were not required, therefore total numbers of respondents may vary throughout this report.

## Characteristics of the Survey Respondents

Table 2 shows the principal survey respondents were primarily at the Emerging (47.5%) and Developing (29.6%) levels. Half of them were principals (50.4%) and the other half assistant principals (42.5%). Coming from all 10 RPDCs, they were primarily white (85.2%), non-CSI (92.1%) leaders in rural areas (56.7%). Most (82.6%) have been in MLDS for 1–3 years.

*Table 2. Characteristics of Principal Survey Respondents, 2021–22*

	Number	Percent
By MLDS Program Level		
Aspiring	21	5.5%
Emerging	180	47.5%
Developing	112	29.6%

	Number	Percent
Transformational	66	17.4%
By Current Primary Position		
Principal	191	50.4%
Assistant Principal	165	43.5%
Other (e.g., director, coach)	23	6.1%
By RPDC		
Central – Warrensburg	19	5.0%
Heart of Missouri	47	12.4%
Kansas City	44	11.6%
Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled (MSSD)	10	2.6%
Northeast – Kirksville	23	6.1%
Northwest – Maryville	10	2.6%
South Central – Rolla	73	19.3%
Southeast – Cape Girardeau	30	7.9%
Southwest – Springfield	53	14.0%
St. Louis	70	18.5%
By CSI School Status		
Yes, a CSI school	30	7.9%
No, not a CSI school	349	92.1%
By Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	0.5%
Asian	2	0.5%
Black or African American	34	9.0%
Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity	4	1.1%
White	323	85.2%
Multi-Racial	3	0.8%
Prefer not to answer	11	2.9%
By Community Type		
City	65	17.2%
Suburban	99	26.1%
Rural	215	56.7%
By Years Participating in MLDS		
1 year	132	34.8%
2 years	94	24.8%
3 years	87	23.0%

	Number	Percent
4 years	34	9.0%
5 years	20	5.3%
More than 5 years	12	3.2%

*Note.* This table shows the characteristics of current MLDS principals in the program during the 2021–22 school year. N = 379. Characteristics of the seven previous MLDS principals who took the survey were not available.

Table 3 shows the superintendent survey respondents were primarily superintendents (94.7%). They came from nine RPDCs.

**Table 3. Characteristics of Superintendent Survey Respondents, 2021–22**

	Number	Percent
By Current Primary Position		
Superintendent	72	94.7%
Central Administrator*	4	5.3%
By RPDC		
Central – Warrensburg	5	6.6%
Heart of Missouri	6	7.9%
Kansas City	1	1.3%
Northeast – Kirksville	10	13.2%
Northwest – Maryville	4	5.3%
South Central – Rolla	25	32.9%
Southeast – Cape Girardeau	10	13.2%
Southwest – Springfield	12	15.8%
St. Louis	3	3.9%

*Note.* N = 76. \*The “Central Administrator” group included two Assistant Superintendents and two Chief Academic Officers.

Table 4 shows nearly eight out of ten specialist survey respondents (77.8%) have worked as an MLDS specialist for 1–3 years.

**Table 4. Characteristics of Specialist Survey Respondents, 2021–22**

Total Years As An MLDS Specialist	Number	Percent
1 year	12	44.4%
2 years	5	18.5%
3 years	4	14.8%
4 years	1	3.7%
5 years	2	7.4%
More than 5 years	3	11.1%

*Note.* N = 27. The survey question was, “How many years, in total, have you been an MLDS specialist? (If 2021–22 is your first year as an MLDS specialist, mark ‘1 year.’)”



Table 5 shows the classroom teacher survey respondents came from nine RPDCs. They were primarily white (86.6%) teachers at elementary (45.6%) and high (35.5%) schools who have worked with their current MLDS principal for 0–6 years (86.4%). Half of them have worked as a teacher for 10 or more years (50.5%).

*Table 5. Characteristics of the Classroom Teacher Survey Respondents, 2021–22*

	Number	Percent
<b>By RPDC</b>		
Central – Warrensburg	12	2.3%
Heart of Missouri	42	8.2%
Kansas City	112	21.7%
Northeast – Kirksville	57	11.1%
Northwest – Maryville	13	2.5%
South Central – Rolla	68	13.2%
Southeast – Cape Girardeau	116	22.5%
Southwest – Springfield	81	15.7%
St. Louis	14	2.7%
<b>By Race/Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	0.4%
Asian	2	0.4%
Black or African American	25	4.9%
Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity	2	0.4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
White	446	86.6%
Multi-Racial	9	1.7%
Prefer not to answer	29	5.6%
<b>By Experience Working with Current Principal at This School</b>		
0–3 years	304	59.0%
4–6 years	141	27.4%
7–9 years	35	6.8%
10 or more years	34	6.6%
No Response	1	0.2%
<b>By School Level</b>		
Elementary	235	45.6%
Middle	97	18.8%
High	183	35.5%

	Number	Percent
By Teaching Experience		
0–3 years	93	18.1%
4–6 years	83	16.1%
7–9 years	74	14.4%
10 or more years	260	50.5%
No Response	5	1.0%

Note. N = 515.

Table 6 shows the number of interviewees by position. R12CC developed three interview protocols for MLDS principals, superintendents, and specialists, all of which were tailored as appropriate to the role of the interviewees. The protocols included questions on the perceptions of implementation fidelity, MLDS trainings, impacts of MLDS on leadership practices, classroom instruction, student learning, and the recruitment and retention of school leaders. Interviewees were also asked about their perceptions of MLDS support amidst COVID-19, factors enhancing or impeding MLDS implementation, and recommendations for further improvement of the program.

Table 6. Number of Interviewees by Position, 2021–22

Role	Number of Interviewees
MLDS Principals	15
Superintendents	10
Specialists	7

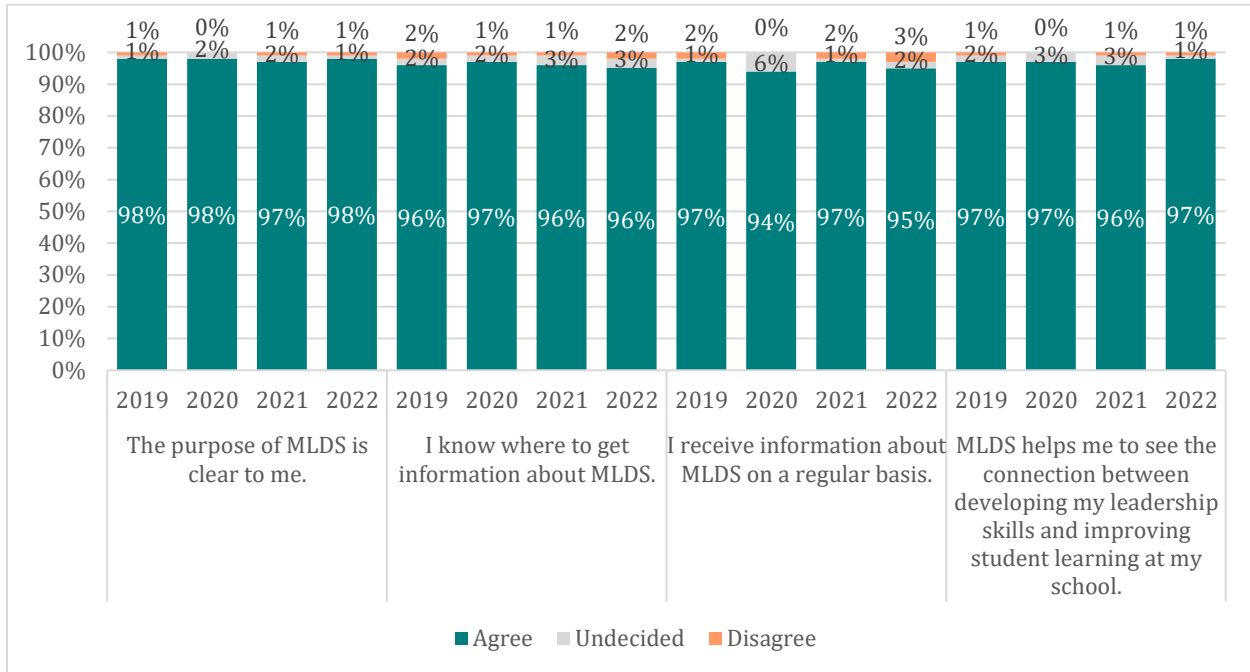
Note. N = 32.

### Implementation Fidelity

To examine respondents’ perceptions of the fidelity of MLDS implementation, this study focused on *Participant Responsiveness* and *Program Differentiation* (e.g., Dane & Schneider, 1998, as cited in U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2015), two dimensions of fidelity that can be adequately captured with survey and interview data. *Participant Responsiveness* refers to the extent to which participants react to or engage in the program (e.g., perceptions about the relevance, appropriateness, and helpfulness of MLDS). *Program Differentiation* refers to the degree that the critical components of the program are distinguishable from each other and from other programs.

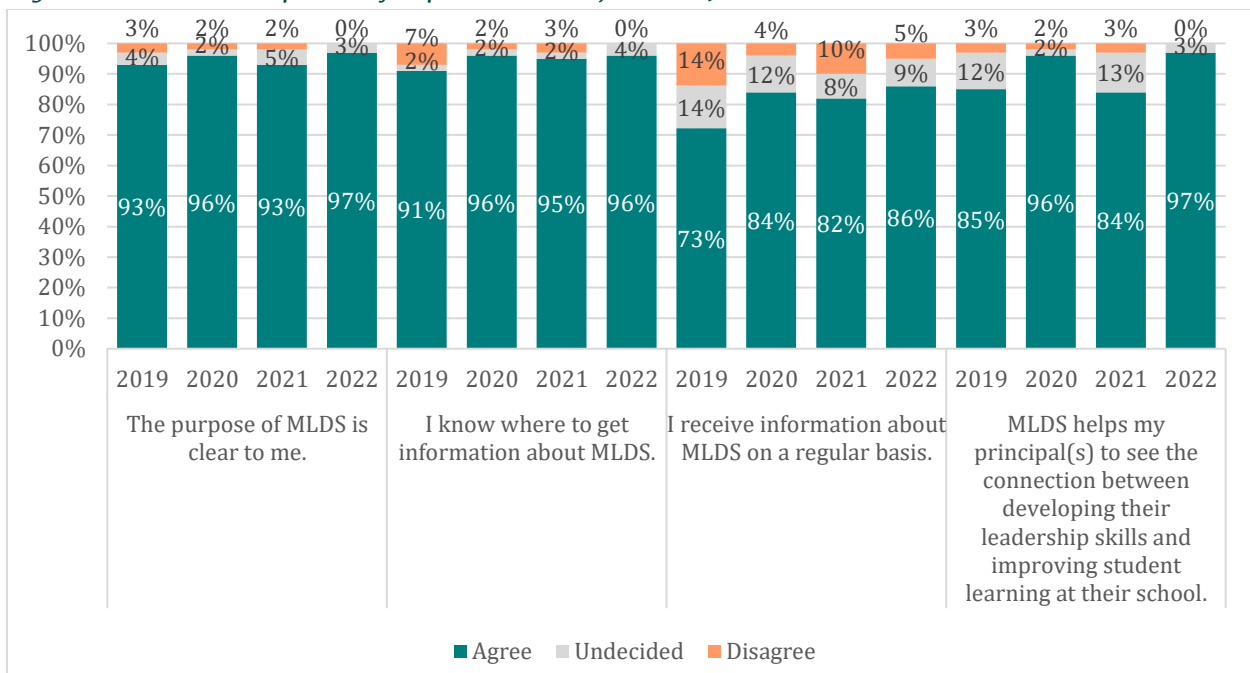
## Appendix D: Survey Results

Figure 1. Overall Perceptions of Principals, 2018–19 to 2021–22

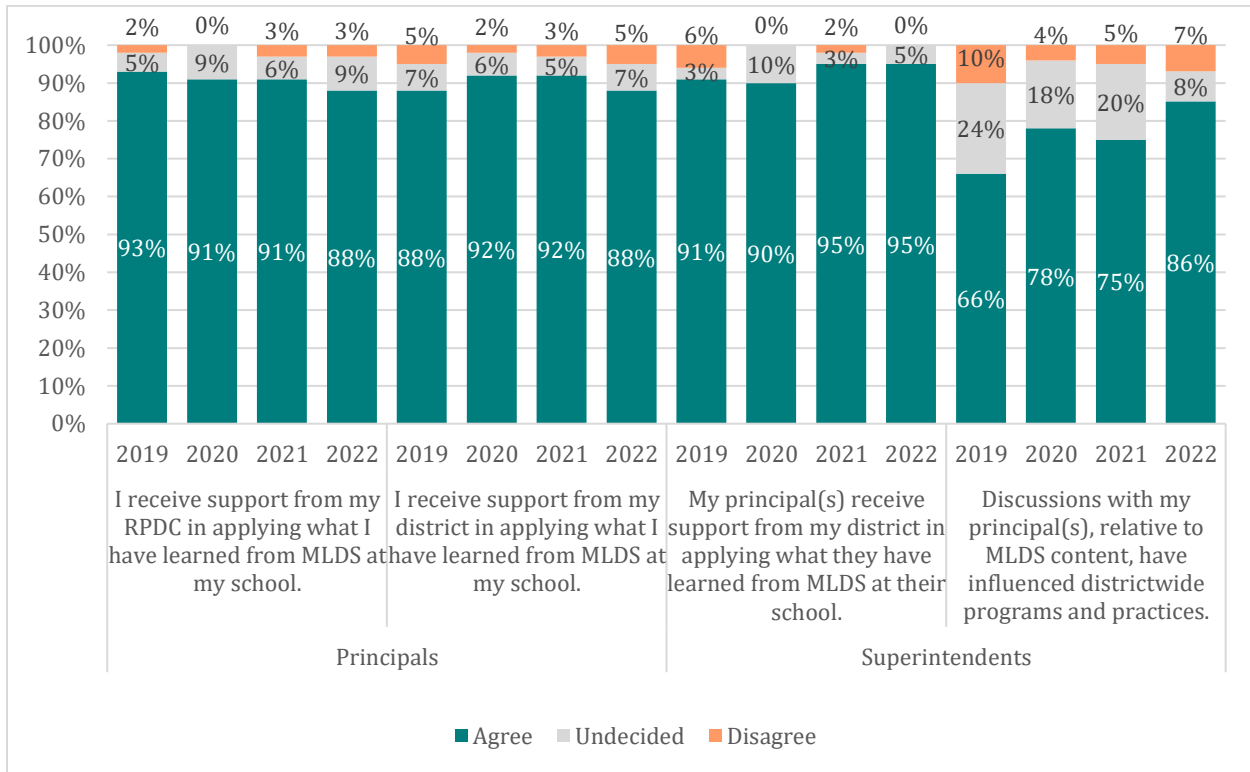


Note. Throughout this report, unless otherwise noted, agree is a composite of strongly agree/agree, and disagree is a composite of strongly disagree/disagree. Due to rounding, percentages may not always add up to precisely 100%. Survey questions in the figures are those used in 2021–22. The 2021–22 survey questions are essentially the same as those in the 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21 surveys with only minor modifications. Slotnik and Liang (2019) and Liang and Slotnik (2020, 2021) include the previous years' survey questions.

Figure 2. Overall Perceptions of Superintendents, 2018–19 to 2021–22



**Figure 3. Overall Perceptions of Principals and Superintendents, 2018–19 to 2021–22**



**Figure 4. Perceptions of Principals on Fidelity of MLDS Implementation, 2018–19 to 2021–22**

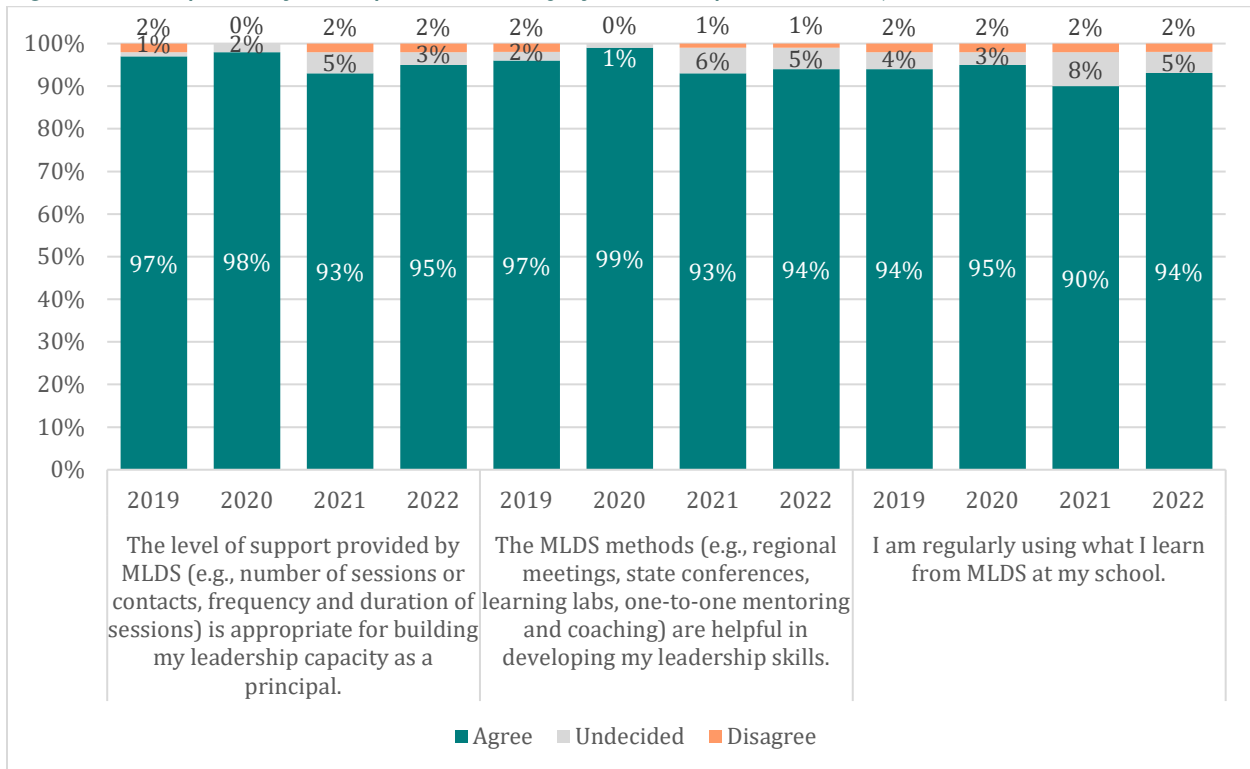


Figure 5. Perceptions of Principals on MLDS Training Content and Materials, 2018–19 to 2021–22

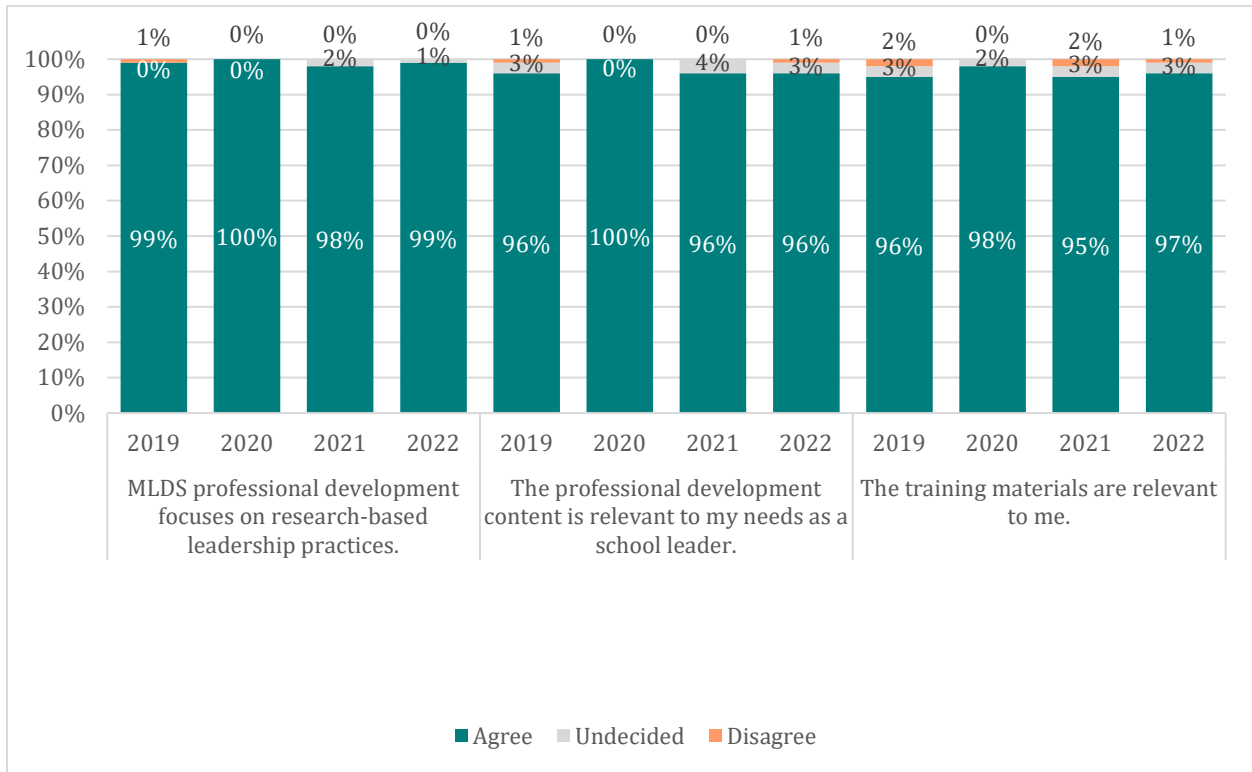
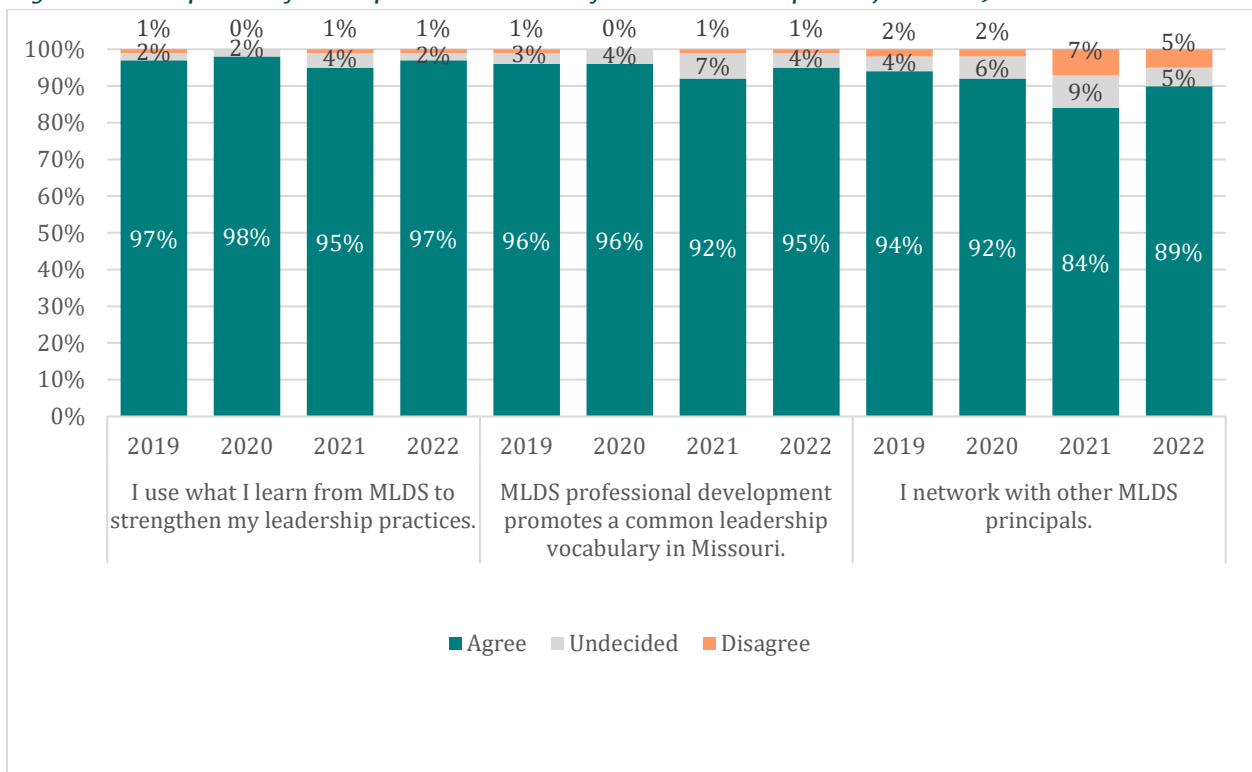


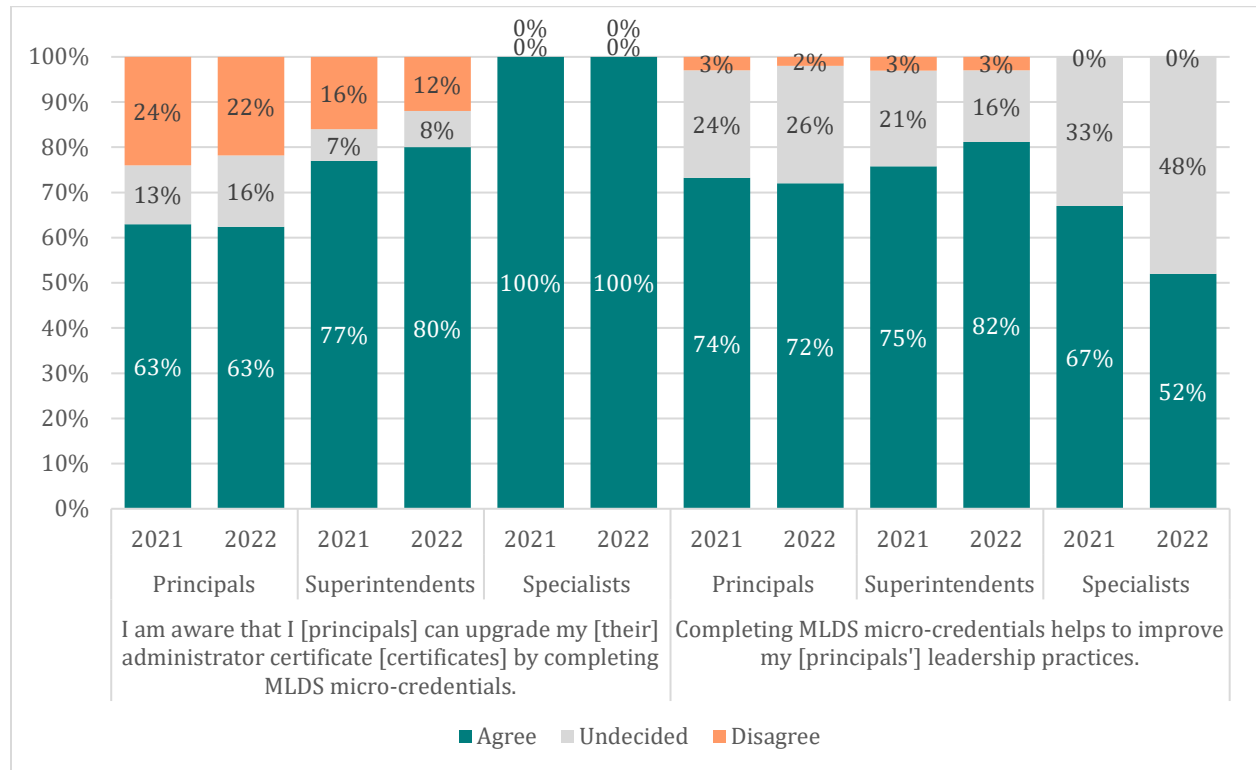
Figure 6. Perceptions of Principals on MLDS Professional Development, 2018–19 to 2021–22



## MLDS Micro-Credentials

MLDS micro-credentials provide principals with an additional path to demonstrate their mastery of critical leadership skills and upgrade their administrator certificate (DESE, 2021). Effective September 1, 2021, principals completing three MLDS micro-credentials can upgrade from an initial administrator certificate to a transition administrator certificate, and to a career continuous administrator certificate by completing fifteen micro-credentials (DESE, n.d.-b).

*Figure 7. Perceptions of Principals, Superintendents, and Specialists on MLDS Micro-Credentials, 2020–21 to 2021–22*



*Note.* Data are only available for 2020–21 and 2021–22. The texts in brackets show the different wording of the questions for superintendents and specialists. N (Specialists, 2021) = 6. N (Specialists, 2022) = 27.



Figure 8. Perceptions of Principals on Benefits and Value of MLDS, 2018–19 to 2021–22

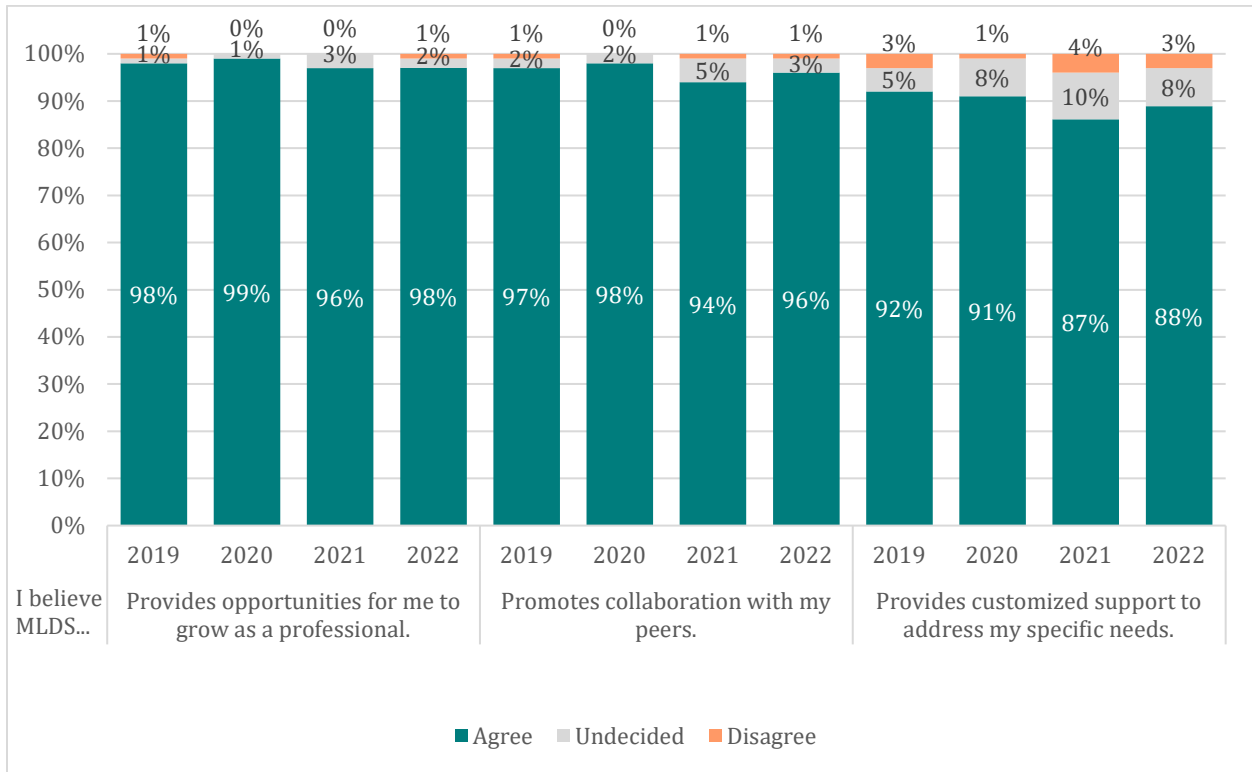
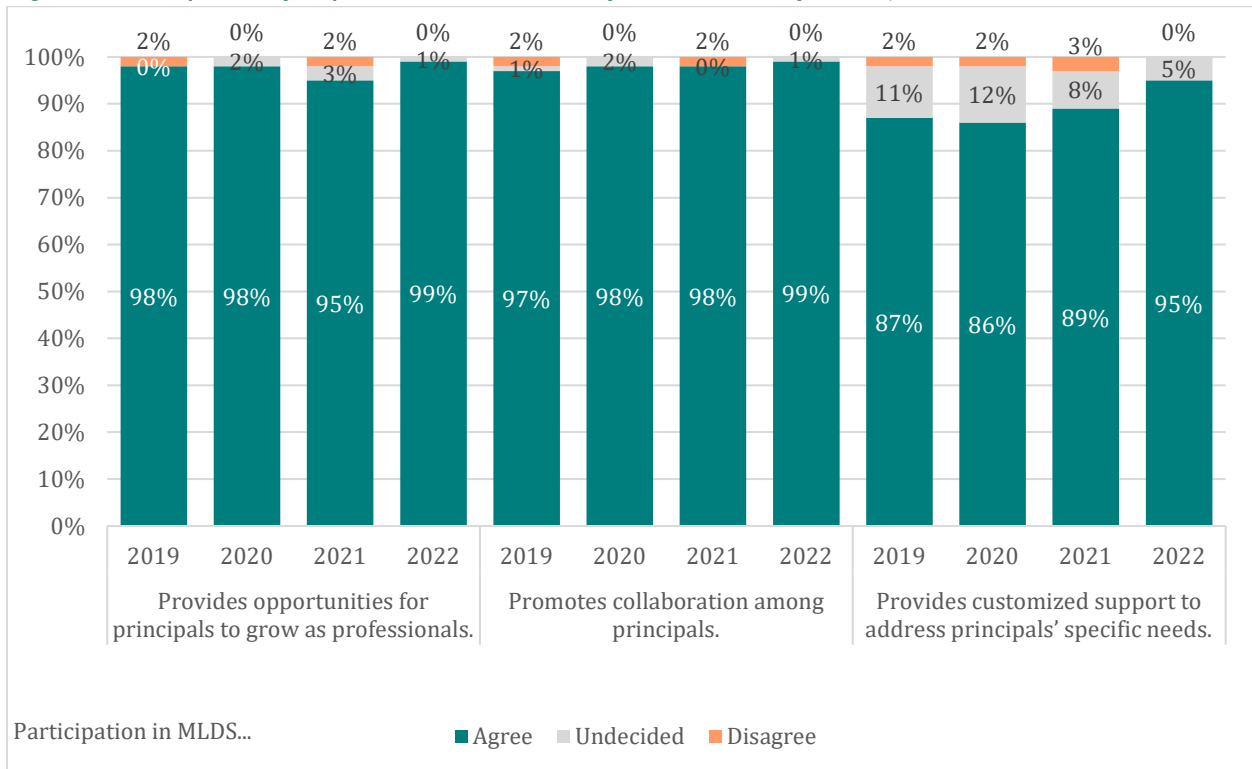
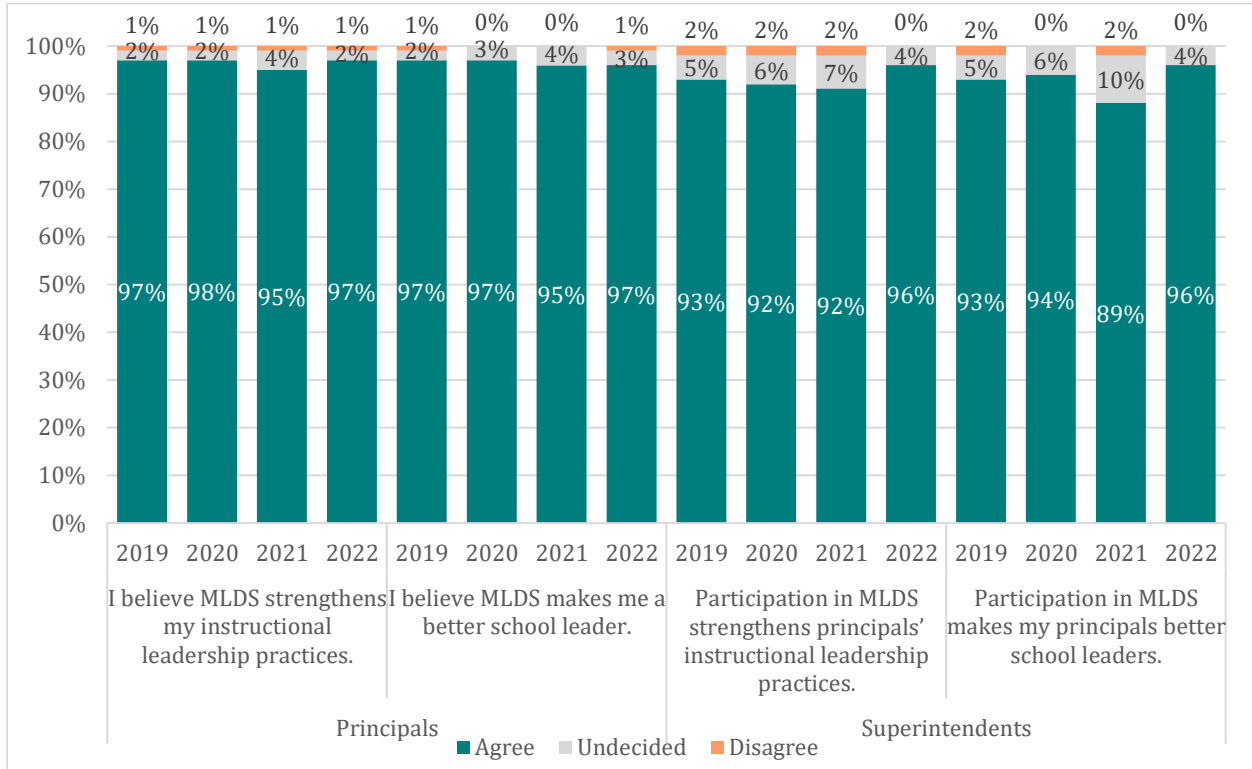


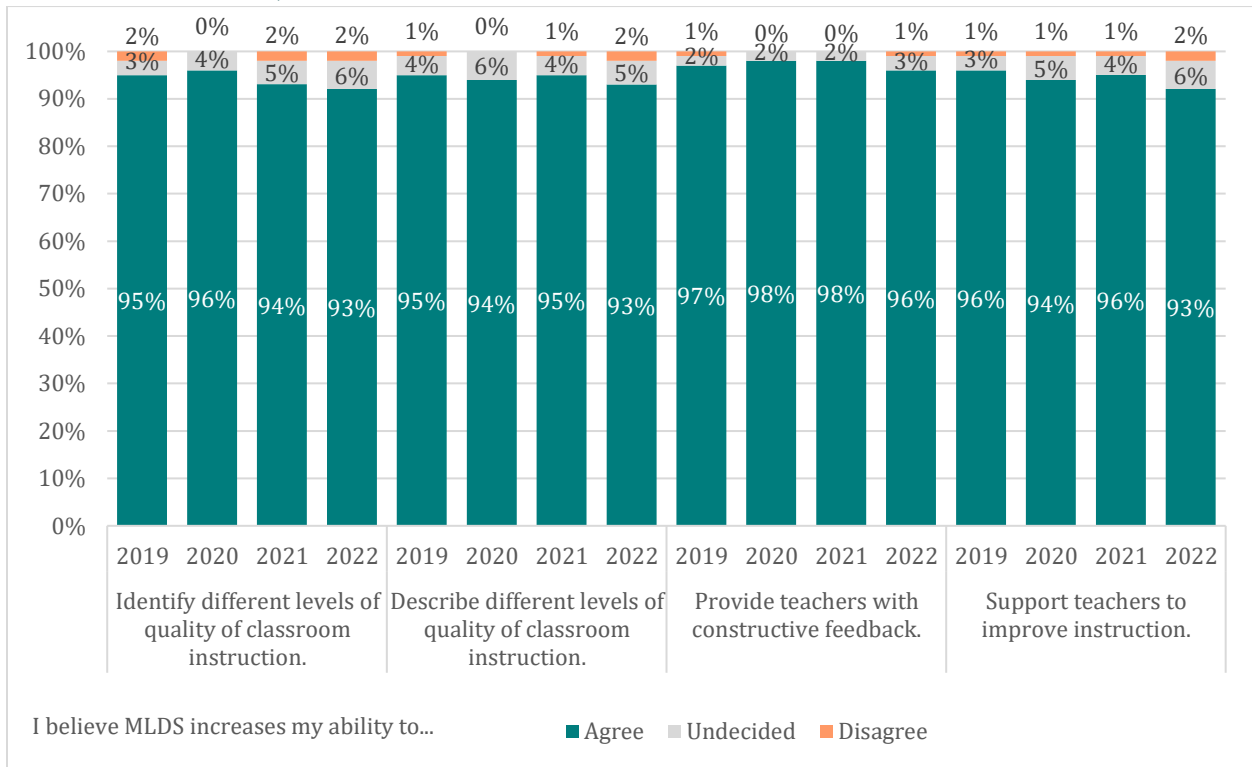
Figure 9. Perceptions of Superintendents on Benefits and Value of MLDS, 2018–19 to 2021–22



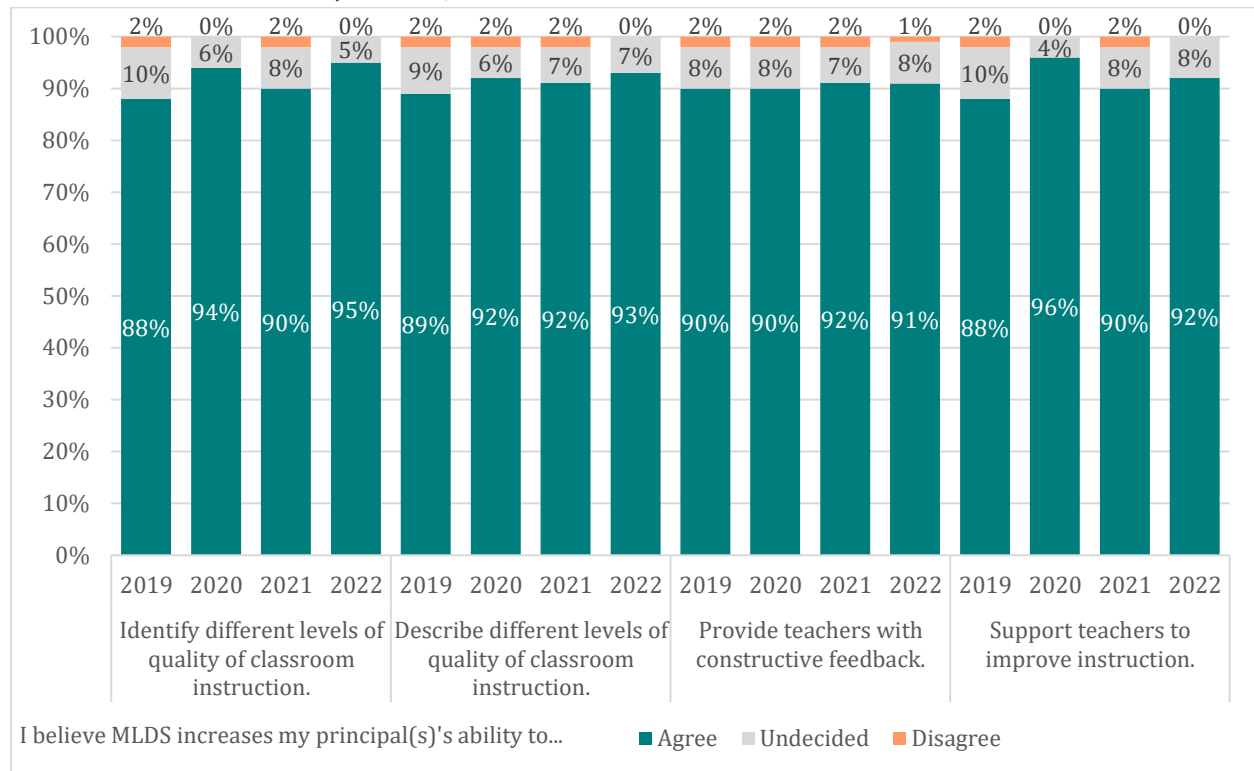
**Figure 10. Perceptions of Principals and Superintendents on Benefits and Value of MLDS, 2018–19 to 2021–22**



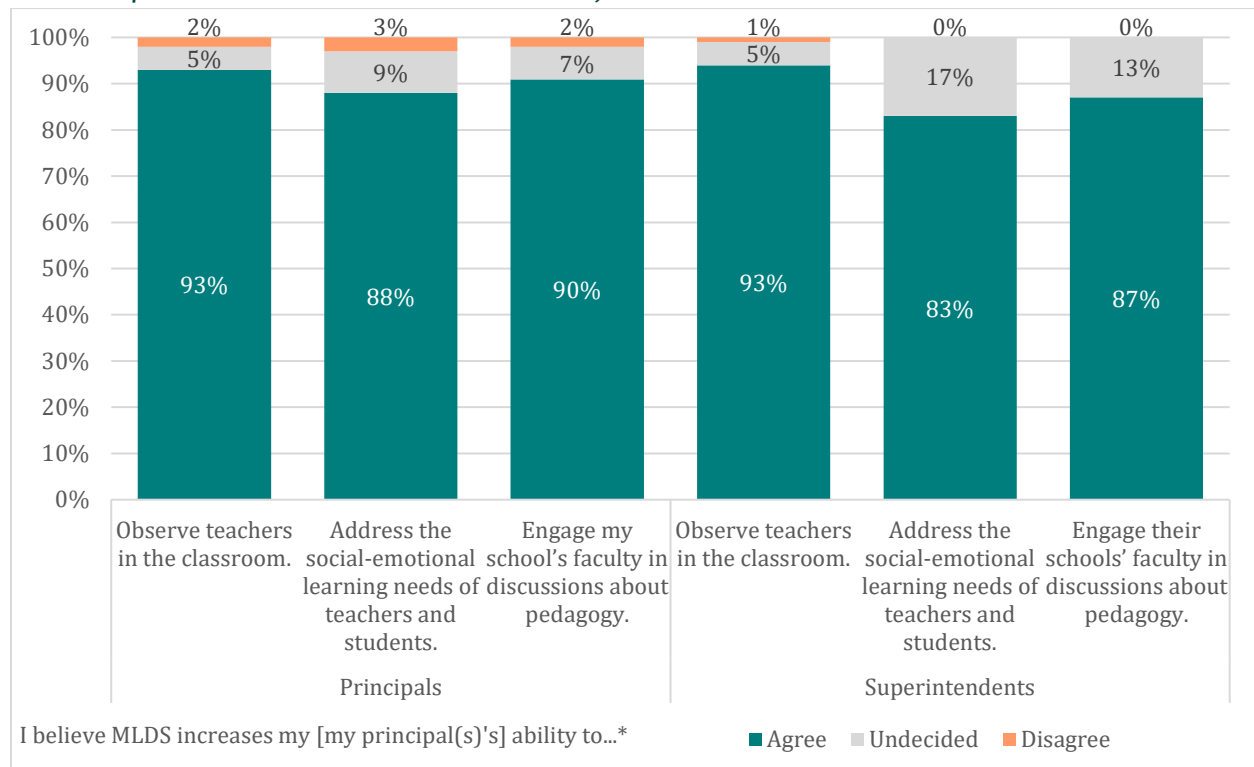
**Figure 11. Perceptions of Principals on Impacts of MLDS on Instructional Leadership Practices and Classroom Instruction, 2018–19 to 2021–22**



**Figure 12. Perceptions of Superintendents on Impacts of MLDS on Instructional Leadership Practices and Classroom Instruction, 2018–19 to 2021–22**

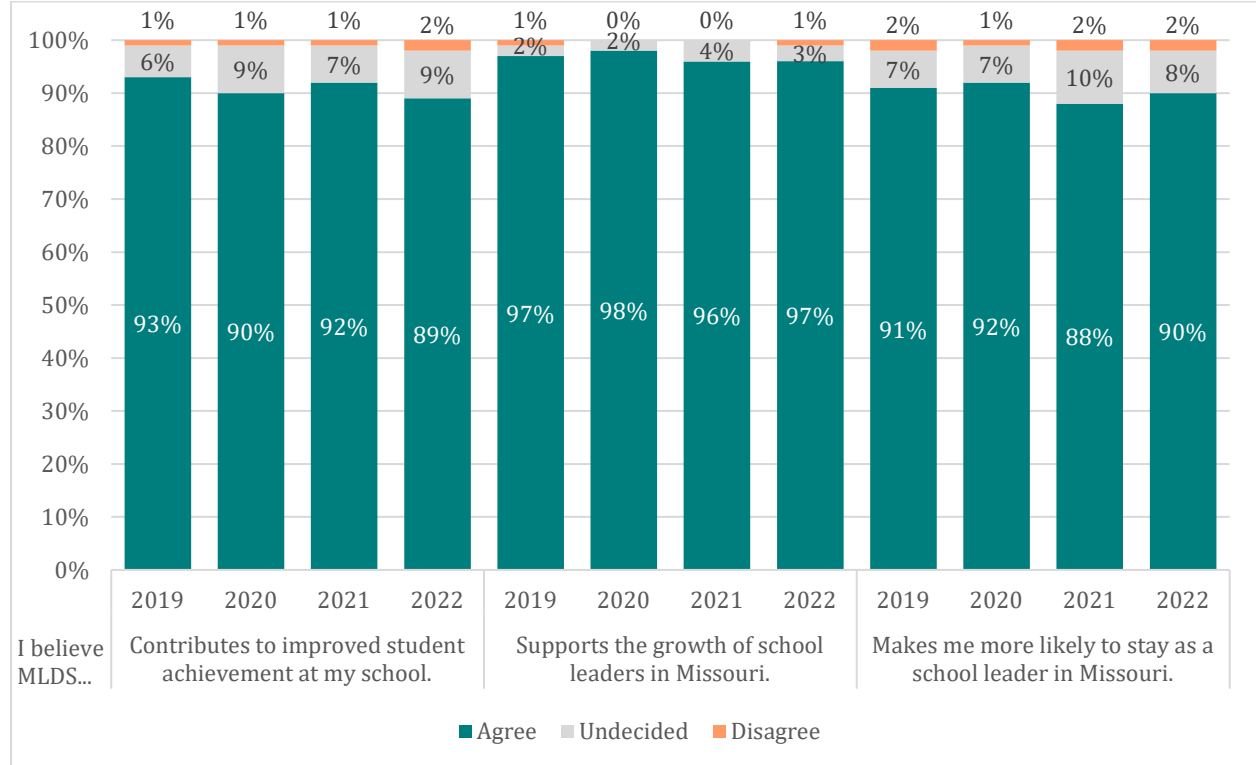


**Figure 13. Perceptions of Principals and Superintendents on Impacts of MLDS on Instructional Leadership Practices and Classroom Instruction, 2021–22**



Note. \*The text in brackets shows the different wording of the question for superintendents.

**Figure 14. Perceptions of Principals on Impacts of MLDS on Student Achievement and School Leader Growth and Retention, 2018–19 to 2021–22**



**Figure 15. Perceptions of Superintendents on Impacts of MLDS on Student Achievement and School Leader Growth and Retention, 2018–19 to 2021–22**

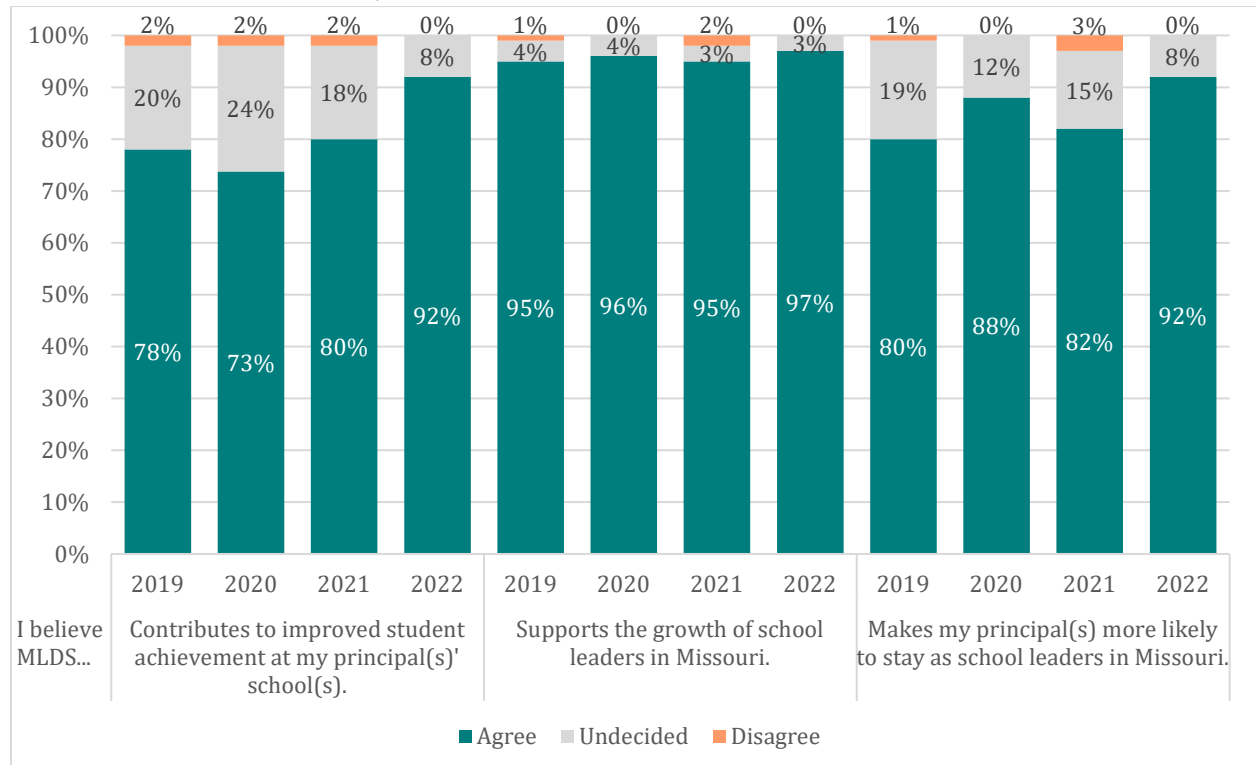


Figure 16. Perceptions of Principals on Support from MLDS, 2020–21 to 2021–22

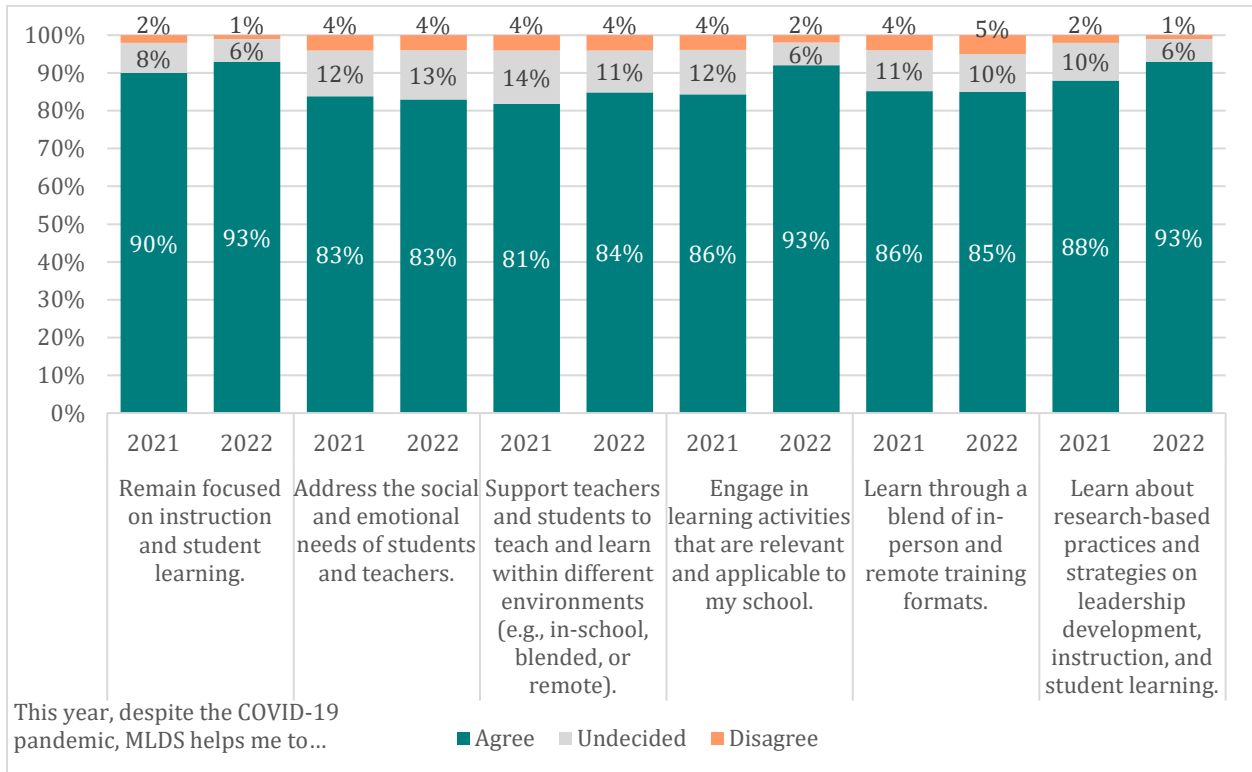


Figure 17. Perceptions of Superintendents on MLDS Support to Principals, 2020–21 to 2021–22

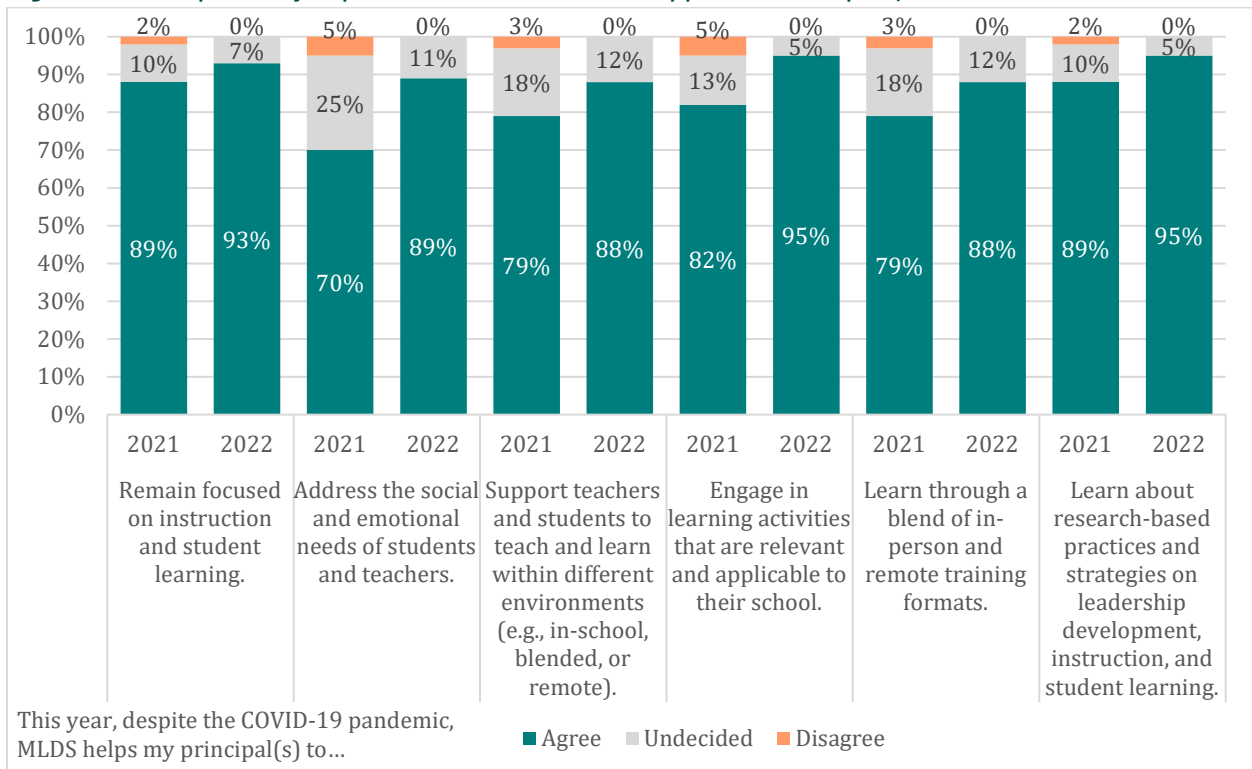


Figure 18. Perceptions of Principals and Superintendents on Support from MLDS Specialists, 2021–22

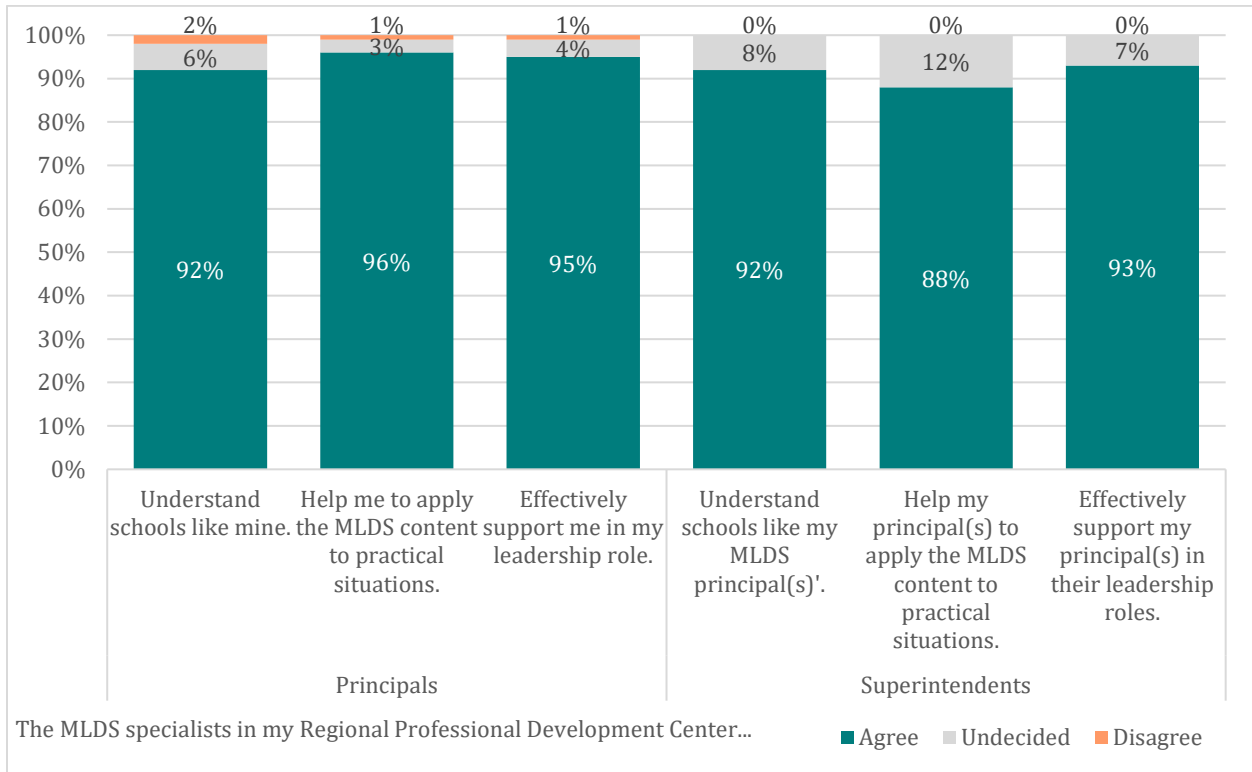
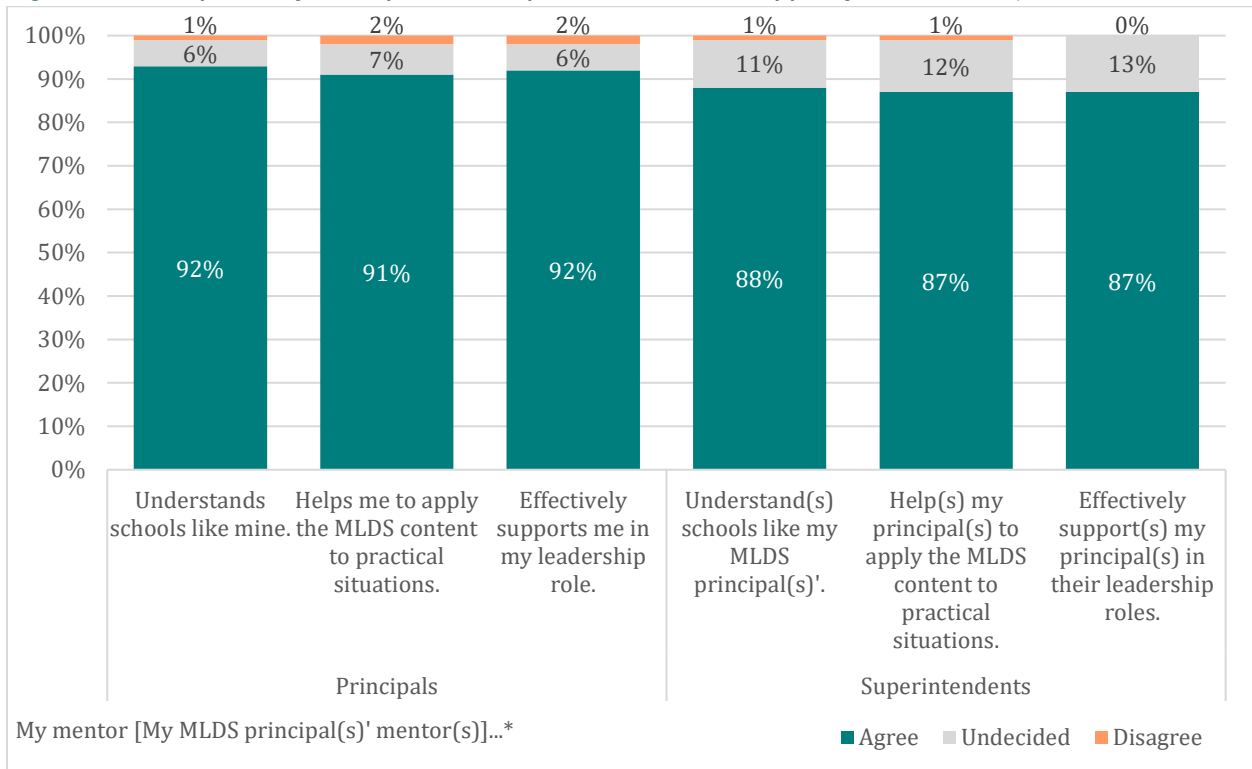


Figure 19. Perceptions of Principals and Superintendents on Support from Mentors, 2021–22



Note. \*The text in brackets shows the different wording of the question for superintendents.



Table 7. Perceptions of Principals by RPDC Region, 2021–22

	South Central				Other RPDCs			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Overall Perceptions								
The purpose of MLDS is clear to me.*	73	84%	16%	0%	304	67%	31%	1%
I know where to get information about MLDS.*	73	74%	23%	3%	305	59%	36%	3%
I receive information about MLDS on a regular basis.*	73	70%	29%	1%	305	57%	37%	3%
I receive support from my district in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.*	73	66%	29%	3%	304	48%	38%	9%
I receive support from my RPDC in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.*	73	78%	19%	3%	305	51%	35%	10%
MLDS helps me to see the connection between developing my leadership skills and improving student learning at my school.*	73	81%	19%	0%	305	63%	34%	2%
I am aware that I can upgrade my administrator certificate by completing MLDS micro-credentials.	73	38%	34%	18%	305	34%	27%	15%
Completing MLDS micro-credentials helps to improve my leadership practices.	73	52%	26%	21%	303	40%	30%	27%
Fidelity of Implementation								
The level of support provided by MLDS (e.g., number of sessions or contacts, frequency and duration of sessions) is appropriate for building my leadership capacity as a principal.*	73	73%	23%	4%	305	55%	39%	3%
The MLDS methods (e.g., regional meetings, state conferences, learning labs, one-to-one mentoring and coaching) are helpful in developing my leadership skills.*	73	79%	21%	0%	305	55%	37%	6%
I am regularly using what I learn from MLDS at my school.*	73	73%	23%	4%	305	48%	45%	5%
Professional Development								
MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices.*	73	78%	22%	0%	304	65%	33%	1%
The professional development content is relevant to my needs as a school leader.*	73	75%	25%	0%	305	59%	36%	4%
The training materials are relevant to me.*	73	81%	19%	0%	304	60%	36%	3%
I use what I learn from MLDS to strengthen my leadership practices.*	73	82%	16%	1%	305	60%	37%	3%
I network with other MLDS principals.*	72	65%	26%	4%	303	50%	39%	6%
MLDS professional development promotes a common leadership vocabulary in Missouri.*	73	71%	27%	1%	304	53%	41%	5%

	South Central				Other RPDCs			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
<b>Benefits and Value   <i>I believe MLDS...</i></b>								
Provides opportunities for me to grow as a professional.*	73	82%	18%	0%	306	66%	31%	2%
Promotes collaboration with my peers.	73	73%	26%	1%	306	68%	27%	4%
Provides customized support to address my specific needs.*	73	66%	29%	4%	306	47%	40%	9%
Strengthens my instructional leadership practices.*	73	78%	22%	0%	306	59%	37%	3%
Makes me a better school leader.*	73	79%	21%	0%	306	63%	33%	3%
<b>Impact   <i>I believe MLDS increases my ability to...</i></b>								
Observe teachers in the classroom.*	73	84%	15%	1%	305	53%	38%	6%
Identify different levels of quality of classroom instruction.*	73	74%	25%	1%	305	49%	42%	7%
Describe different levels of quality of classroom instruction.*	73	73%	25%	3%	306	49%	43%	6%
Provide teachers with constructive feedback.*	73	82%	18%	0%	305	60%	35%	4%
Support teachers to improve instruction.*	73	77%	22%	1%	306	55%	37%	7%
Address the social-emotional learning needs of teachers and students.*	73	59%	37%	4%	306	41%	45%	10%
Engage my school's faculty in discussions about pedagogy.*	73	63%	30%	7%	306	41%	49%	8%
<b><i>I believe MLDS...</i></b>								
Contributes to improved student achievement at my school.*	73	71%	27%	1%	306	42%	45%	11%
Makes me more likely to stay as a school leader in Missouri.*	73	70%	27%	3%	306	47%	41%	9%
Supports the growth of school leaders in Missouri.*	73	77%	23%	0%	305	60%	36%	3%
<b>This Year's Experience   <i>This year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, MLDS helps me to...</i></b>								
Remain focused on instruction and student learning.*	73	68%	30%	1%	304	45%	46%	7%
Address the social and emotional needs of students and teachers.*	73	60%	30%	10%	305	35%	45%	14%
Support teachers and students to teach and learn within different environments (e.g., in-school, blended, or remote).*	73	64%	30%	3%	305	36%	46%	13%
Engage in learning activities that are relevant and applicable to my school.*	73	71%	27%	1%	305	42%	49%	7%

	South Central				Other RPDCs			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Learn through a blend of in-person and remote training formats.*	73	62%	27%	8%	305	41%	43%	10%
Learn about research-based practices and strategies on leadership development, instruction, and student learning.*	72	74%	22%	4%	303	48%	44%	6%
Support from MLDS Specialists and Mentors   <i>The MLDS specialists in my Regional Professional Development Center...</i>								
Understand schools like mine.*	72	83%	17%	0%	305	59%	31%	7%
Help me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.*	73	82%	18%	0%	305	60%	35%	4%
Effectively support me in my leadership role.*	73	86%	11%	3%	304	62%	33%	5%
<i>My mentor...</i>								
Understands schools like mine.*	72	81%	18%	1%	268	60%	31%	8%
Helps me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.*	72	79%	15%	4%	268	57%	33%	7%
Effectively supports me in my leadership role.*	72	81%	13%	6%	266	59%	33%	6%

Note. As the percentages of MLDS principals who disagree or strongly disagree with the survey questions were very small, the table shows only the percentages of MLDS principals who strongly agree (SA), agree (A), and are undecided (U) about the survey questions. \* indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level between the two groups: that is those in the South-Central region and those in all other regions. Responses of the MSSD principals, though different from their peers in the other RPDC regions, are included in the “Other RPDCs” group due to the small number of respondents (N = 10).

Table 8. Perceptions of Principals by School CSI Status, 2021–22

	CSI Principals				Non-CSI Principals			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Overall Perceptions								
The purpose of MLDS is clear to me.	29	62%	38%	0%	348	71%	27%	1%
I know where to get information about MLDS.	29	45%	52%	3%	349	63%	32%	3%
I receive information about MLDS on a regular basis.	29	45%	52%	0%	349	61%	34%	3%
I receive support from my district in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.	28	36%	46%	11%	349	53%	36%	7%
I receive support from my RPDC in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.	29	48%	34%	14%	349	57%	32%	9%
MLDS helps me to see the connection between developing my leadership skills and improving student learning at my school.	29	52%	45%	3%	349	67%	30%	1%

	CSI Principals				Non-CSI Principals			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
I am aware that I can upgrade my administrator certificate by completing MLDS micro-credentials.*	29	21%	17%	24%	349	36%	29%	15%
Completing MLDS micro-credentials helps to improve my leadership practices.	28	29%	32%	36%	348	43%	29%	25%
<b>Fidelity of Implementation</b>								
The level of support provided by MLDS (e.g., number of sessions or contacts, frequency and duration of sessions) is appropriate for building my leadership capacity as a principal.	29	45%	48%	7%	349	60%	35%	3%
The MLDS methods (e.g., regional meetings, state conferences, learning labs, one-to-one mentoring and coaching) are helpful in developing my leadership skills.*	29	38%	59%	3%	349	62%	32%	5%
I am regularly using what I learn from MLDS at my school.	29	38%	52%	7%	349	54%	40%	5%
<b>Professional Development</b>								
MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices.	29	52%	48%	0%	348	69%	29%	1%
The professional development content is relevant to my needs as a school leader.	29	45%	52%	3%	349	64%	32%	3%
The training materials are relevant to me.*	29	45%	55%	0%	348	66%	31%	3%
I use what I learn from MLDS to strengthen my leadership practices.	29	55%	41%	3%	349	65%	32%	2%
I network with other MLDS principals.	29	34%	52%	7%	346	54%	35%	5%
MLDS professional development promotes a common leadership vocabulary in Missouri.*	29	38%	52%	10%	348	58%	38%	4%
<b>Benefits and Value   I believe MLDS...</b>								
Provides opportunities for me to grow as a professional.	30	63%	37%	0%	349	70%	28%	2%
Promotes collaboration with my peers.	30	57%	40%	3%	349	70%	26%	3%
Provides customized support to address my specific needs.	30	33%	50%	13%	349	52%	36%	8%
Strengthens my instructional leadership practices.	30	47%	50%	3%	349	64%	33%	2%
Makes me a better school leader.*	30	43%	57%	0%	349	68%	28%	3%
<b>Impact   I believe MLDS increases my ability to...</b>								
Observe teachers in the classroom.*	30	27%	50%	20%	348	62%	32%	4%
Identify different levels of quality of classroom instruction.*	29	28%	52%	17%	349	56%	38%	5%
Describe different levels of quality of classroom instruction.*	30	27%	60%	7%	349	56%	38%	5%

	CSI Principals				Non-CSI Principals			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Provide teachers with constructive feedback.*	30	33%	57%	7%	348	67%	30%	3%
Support teachers to improve instruction.*	30	37%	47%	10%	349	61%	33%	5%
Address the social-emotional learning needs of teachers and students.	30	30%	53%	10%	349	46%	42%	9%
Engage my school's faculty in discussions about pedagogy.	30	33%	50%	7%	349	46%	45%	7%
<i>I believe MLDS...</i>								
Contributes to improved student achievement at my school.*	30	20%	50%	23%	349	50%	41%	8%
Makes me more likely to stay as a school leader in Missouri.*	30	23%	47%	27%	349	54%	38%	6%
Supports the growth of school leaders in Missouri.*	30	37%	60%	3%	348	65%	32%	3%
This Year's Experience   <i>This year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, MLDS helps me to...</i>								
Remain focused on instruction and student learning.	30	37%	47%	17%	347	50%	43%	5%
Address the social and emotional needs of students and teachers.*	30	20%	57%	20%	348	42%	41%	13%
Support teachers and students to teach and learn within different environments (e.g., in-school, blended, or remote).*	30	20%	57%	23%	348	43%	42%	10%
Engage in learning activities that are relevant and applicable to my school.*	30	20%	67%	13%	348	50%	43%	5%
Learn through a blend of in-person and remote training formats.	30	27%	63%	10%	348	47%	38%	10%
Learn about research-based practices and strategies on leadership development, instruction, and student learning.*	30	27%	60%	13%	345	55%	38%	5%
Support from MLDS Specialists and Mentors   <i>The MLDS specialists in my Regional Professional Development Center...</i>								
Understand schools like mine.*	30	47%	40%	10%	347	65%	27%	5%
Help me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.*	30	40%	57%	3%	348	66%	30%	3%
Effectively support me in my leadership role.*	29	45%	48%	7%	348	69%	27%	4%

	CSI Principals				Non-CSI Principals			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
<i>My mentor...</i>								
Understands schools like mine.	26	50%	42%	8%	314	65%	27%	6%
Helps me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.*	26	38%	50%	8%	314	63%	28%	7%
Effectively supports me in my leadership role.*	26	42%	50%	8%	312	65%	27%	6%

Note. As the percentages of MLDS principals who disagree or strongly disagree with the survey questions were very small, the table shows only the percentages of MLDS principals who strongly agree (SA), agree (A), and are undecided (U) about the survey questions. \* indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level between the two groups.

Table 9. Perceptions of Principals by Community Type, 2021–22

	City			Suburban			Rural		
	n	SA	A	n	SA	A	n	SA	A
Overall Perceptions									
The purpose of MLDS is clear to me.	65	72%	28%	97	67%	31%	215	71%	27%
I know where to get information about MLDS.	65	60%	38%	98	60%	35%	215	63%	32%
I receive information about MLDS on a regular basis.	65	60%	34%	98	55%	39%	215	62%	34%
I receive support from my district in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.* **	64	36%	48%	98	45%	37%	215	59%	33%
I receive support from my RPDC in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.	65	57%	32%	98	49%	32%	215	60%	32%
MLDS helps me to see the connection between developing my leadership skills and improving student learning at my school.	65	62%	35%	98	64%	34%	215	68%	29%
I am aware that I can upgrade my administrator certificate by completing MLDS micro-credentials.	65	34%	23%	98	37%	26%	215	34%	31%
Completing MLDS micro-credentials helps to improve my leadership practices.	64	39%	33%	97	46%	25%	215	41%	31%
Fidelity of Implementation									
The level of support provided by MLDS (e.g., number of sessions or contacts, frequency and duration of sessions) is appropriate for building my leadership capacity as a principal.	65	52%	45%	98	54%	41%	215	63%	32%
The MLDS methods (e.g., regional meetings, state conferences, learning labs, one-to-one mentoring and coaching) are helpful in developing my leadership skills.	65	51%	43%	98	58%	34%	215	64%	32%

	City			Suburban			Rural		
	n	SA	A	n	SA	A	n	SA	A
I am regularly using what I learn from MLDS at my school.	65	43%	52%	98	52%	38%	215	56%	39%
<b>Professional Development</b>									
MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices.	64	67%	33%	98	68%	31%	215	68%	30%
The professional development content is relevant to my needs as a school leader.	65	63%	34%	98	62%	33%	215	62%	34%
The training materials are relevant to me.	64	61%	36%	98	61%	36%	215	66%	30%
I use what I learn from MLDS to strengthen my leadership practices.	65	63%	34%	98	59%	37%	215	67%	31%
I network with other MLDS principals.**	63	48%	46%	98	43%	42%	214	59%	31%
MLDS professional development promotes a common leadership vocabulary in Missouri.	65	51%	45%	97	48%	43%	215	61%	35%
<b>Benefits and Value   I believe MLDS...</b>									
Provides opportunities for me to grow as a professional.	65	71%	29%	99	66%	30%	215	70%	27%
Promotes collaboration with my peers.	65	68%	32%	99	64%	29%	215	71%	24%
Provides customized support to address my specific needs.	65	43%	45%	99	48%	36%	215	54%	36%
Strengthens my instructional leadership practices.	65	57%	40%	99	58%	38%	215	67%	30%
Makes me a better school leader.	65	63%	35%	99	62%	34%	215	69%	27%
<b>Impact   I believe MLDS increases my ability to...</b>									
Observe teachers in the classroom.	65	48%	43%	99	57%	36%	214	64%	30%
Identify different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	64	47%	44%	99	48%	44%	215	59%	34%
Describe different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	65	46%	46%	99	52%	42%	215	56%	36%
Provide teachers with constructive feedback.	65	63%	34%	98	58%	37%	215	68%	29%
Support teachers to improve instruction.	65	55%	38%	99	55%	38%	215	62%	30%
Address the social-emotional learning needs of teachers and students.	65	34%	55%	99	44%	43%	215	48%	40%
Engage my school's faculty in discussions about pedagogy.	65	38%	51%	99	41%	51%	215	48%	41%
<b>I believe MLDS...</b>									
Contributes to improved student achievement at my school.	65	43%	45%	99	40%	47%	215	52%	39%

	City			Suburban			Rural		
	n	SA	A	n	SA	A	n	SA	A
Makes me more likely to stay as a school leader in Missouri.	65	43%	40%	99	52%	37%	215	53%	39%
Supports the growth of school leaders in Missouri.	65	58%	38%	99	62%	35%	214	65%	32%
<i>This Year's Experience   This year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, MLDS helps me to...</i>									
Remain focused on instruction and student learning.	65	43%	49%	99	49%	42%	213	51%	42%
Address the social and emotional needs of students and teachers.	65	31%	51%	99	41%	40%	214	43%	41%
Support teachers and students to teach and learn within different environments (e.g., in-school, blended, or remote).	65	35%	46%	99	40%	42%	214	43%	43%
Engage in learning activities that are relevant and applicable to my school.	65	42%	49%	99	52%	41%	214	48%	45%
Learn through a blend of in-person and remote training formats.	65	40%	45%	99	47%	36%	214	46%	40%
Learn about research-based practices and strategies on leadership development, instruction, and student learning.	65	49%	43%	97	56%	37%	213	53%	40%
<i>Support from MLDS Specialists and Mentors   The MLDS specialists in my Regional Professional Development Center...</i>									
Understand schools like mine.	65	58%	29%	99	57%	34%	213	69%	25%
Help me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	65	54%	42%	99	61%	34%	214	69%	28%
Effectively support me in my leadership role.	64	58%	34%	99	61%	33%	214	72%	24%
<i>My mentor...</i>									
Understands schools like mine.	55	55%	36%	84	65%	26%	201	66%	26%
Helps me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	55	51%	42%	84	67%	23%	201	62%	29%
Effectively supports me in my leadership role.	54	56%	41%	83	69%	20%	201	63%	29%

Note. \* indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level between “City” and “Suburban”. \*\* indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level between “Suburban” and “Rural”.



Table 10. Perceptions of Principals by Race/Ethnicity, 2021–22

	White				Other Race/Ethnicity			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Overall Perceptions								
The purpose of MLDS is clear to me.	322	71%	27%	1%	44	66%	32%	0%
I know where to get information about MLDS.	323	63%	32%	3%	44	55%	45%	0%
I receive information about MLDS on a regular basis.	323	61%	34%	3%	44	55%	43%	0%
I receive support from my district in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.*	323	55%	34%	7%	43	30%	53%	12%
I receive support from my RPDC in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.	323	58%	31%	9%	44	50%	39%	9%
MLDS helps me to see the connection between developing my leadership skills and improving student learning at my school.	323	67%	30%	1%	44	59%	39%	2%
I am aware that I can upgrade my administrator certificate by completing MLDS micro-credentials.	323	35%	28%	16%	44	34%	32%	9%
Completing MLDS micro-credentials helps to improve my leadership practices.	322	42%	30%	26%	44	43%	30%	23%
Fidelity of Implementation								
The level of support provided by MLDS (e.g., number of sessions or contacts, frequency and duration of sessions) is appropriate for building my leadership capacity as a principal.	323	60%	34%	3%	44	55%	45%	0%
The MLDS methods (e.g., regional meetings, state conferences, learning labs, one-to-one mentoring and coaching) are helpful in developing my leadership skills.	323	61%	33%	5%	44	55%	45%	0%
I am regularly using what I learn from MLDS at my school.	323	54%	40%	4%	44	43%	50%	7%
Professional Development								
MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices.	322	69%	30%	1%	44	64%	36%	0%
The professional development content is relevant to my needs as a school leader.	323	63%	33%	3%	44	61%	39%	0%
The training materials are relevant to me.	322	65%	32%	2%	44	59%	41%	0%
I use what I learn from MLDS to strengthen my leadership practices.	323	65%	32%	2%	44	61%	39%	0%
I network with other MLDS principals.	320	55%	34%	5%	44	48%	43%	7%
MLDS professional development promotes a common leadership vocabulary in Missouri.	322	57%	39%	3%	44	52%	36%	11%
Benefits and Value   <i>I believe MLDS...</i>								

	White				Other Race/Ethnicity			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Provides opportunities for me to grow as a professional.	323	69%	29%	2%	45	76%	24%	0%
Promotes collaboration with my peers.	323	69%	26%	4%	45	71%	29%	0%
Provides customized support to address my specific needs.	323	52%	36%	8%	45	49%	44%	4%
Strengthens my instructional leadership practices.	323	64%	33%	2%	45	58%	42%	0%
Makes me a better school leader.	323	68%	28%	3%	45	58%	42%	0%
<b>Impact   I believe MLDS increases my ability to...</b>								
Observe teachers in the classroom.	322	61%	33%	4%	45	56%	36%	9%
Identify different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	323	56%	37%	5%	45	53%	42%	4%
Describe different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	323	55%	38%	5%	45	51%	47%	0%
Provide teachers with constructive feedback.	322	67%	30%	2%	45	60%	38%	0%
Support teachers to improve instruction.	323	61%	33%	5%	45	58%	36%	4%
Address the social-emotional learning needs of teachers and students.	323	46%	42%	9%	45	47%	44%	7%
Engage my school's faculty in discussions about pedagogy.	323	46%	45%	7%	45	42%	51%	2%
<b>I believe MLDS...</b>								
Contributes to improved student achievement at my school.	323	49%	41%	9%	45	40%	47%	11%
Makes me more likely to stay as a school leader in Missouri.*	323	54%	37%	7%	45	38%	47%	11%
Supports the growth of school leaders in Missouri.	322	65%	32%	2%	45	58%	40%	2%
<b>This Year's Experience   This year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, MLDS helps me to...</b>								
Remain focused on instruction and student learning.	321	50%	42%	6%	45	44%	49%	7%
Address the social and emotional needs of students and teachers.	322	42%	40%	13%	45	36%	49%	13%
Support teachers and students to teach and learn within different environments (e.g., in-school, blended, or remote).	322	43%	41%	11%	45	33%	53%	13%
Engage in learning activities that are relevant and applicable to my school.	322	50%	42%	6%	45	40%	58%	2%
Learn through a blend of in-person and remote training formats.	322	45%	39%	10%	45	51%	42%	7%

	White				Other Race/Ethnicity			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Learn about research-based practices and strategies on leadership development, instruction, and student learning.	319	55%	39%	5%	45	51%	44%	4%
Support from MLDS Specialists and Mentors   <i>The MLDS specialists in my Regional Professional Development Center...</i>								
Understand schools like mine.	321	66%	28%	4%	45	56%	31%	11%
Help me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	322	67%	28%	4%	45	51%	49%	0%
Effectively support me in my leadership role.*	321	70%	26%	4%	45	53%	42%	4%
<i>My mentor...</i>								
Understands schools like mine.	288	66%	26%	7%	43	58%	37%	2%
Helps me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	288	64%	27%	7%	43	51%	44%	2%
Effectively supports me in my leadership role.	286	66%	26%	7%	43	53%	42%	2%

Note. The race/ethnicity answer choices were retrieved from the template (<https://dese.mo.gov/media/24306/download>) created by DESE’s Office of Data System Management. The “Other Race/Ethnicity” group includes “American Indian or Alaska Native”, “Asian”, “Black or African American”, “Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity”, and “Multi-Racial”. \*indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level between the two groups.

**Table 11. Perceptions of Principals by Years of Experience with MLDS, 2021–22**

	1 Year		2 Years		3 Years		4+ Years	
	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A
Overall Perceptions								
The purpose of MLDS is clear to me.	70%	24%	63%	37%	72%	28%	77%	23%
I know where to get information about MLDS.	60%	33%	54%	40%	66%	32%	73%	27%
I receive information about MLDS on a regular basis.	56%	37%	58%	35%	62%	36%	67%	30%
I receive support from my district in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.	58%	30%	42%	45%	47%	41%	58%	32%
I receive support from my RPDC in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.	57%	31%	51%	34%	52%	37%	70%	24%
MLDS helps me to see the connection between developing my leadership skills and improving student learning at my school.	67%	29%	61%	35%	64%	36%	74%	24%
I am aware that I can upgrade my administrator certificate by completing MLDS micro-credentials.	39%	30%	33%	27%	33%	22%	30%	33%
Completing MLDS micro-credentials helps to improve my leadership practices.*	49%	31%	38%	32%	33%	27%	48%	26%

	1 Year		2 Years		3 Years		4+ Years	
	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A
<b>Fidelity of Implementation</b>								
The level of support provided by MLDS (e.g., number of sessions or contacts, frequency and duration of sessions) is appropriate for building my leadership capacity as a principal.	58%	36%	56%	37%	57%	38%	65%	35%
The MLDS methods (e.g., regional meetings, state conferences, learning labs, one-to-one mentoring and coaching) are helpful in developing my leadership skills.	58%	36%	57%	35%	59%	36%	71%	26%
I am regularly using what I learn from MLDS at my school.	53%	39%	52%	39%	49%	47%	58%	39%
<b>Professional Development</b>								
MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices.	65%	31%	62%	38%	71%	29%	77%	23%
The professional development content is relevant to my needs as a school leader.	61%	32%	57%	39%	62%	37%	73%	26%
The training materials are relevant to me.	64%	31%	59%	38%	63%	34%	73%	27%
I use what I learn from MLDS to strengthen my leadership practices.	63%	32%	57%	40%	64%	33%	76%	24%
I network with other MLDS principals.****	49%	38%	41%	48%	59%	34%	68%	21%
MLDS professional development promotes a common leadership vocabulary in Missouri.	56%	37%	49%	45%	57%	43%	65%	29%
<b>Benefits and Value   I believe MLDS...</b>								
Provides opportunities for me to grow as a professional.****	70%	26%	59%	39%	69%	30%	83%	17%
Promotes collaboration with my peers.	70%	23%	62%	33%	69%	30%	76%	23%
Provides customized support to address my specific needs.****	52%	33%	43%	40%	51%	44%	62%	33%
Strengthens my instructional leadership practices.****	63%	33%	53%	41%	64%	34%	74%	26%
Makes me a better school leader.****	67%	27%	56%	39%	67%	33%	77%	23%
<b>Impact   I believe MLDS increases my ability to...</b>								
Observe teachers in the classroom.	60%	34%	56%	36%	55%	40%	68%	23%
Identify different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	51%	37%	52%	40%	51%	47%	67%	29%
Describe different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	52%	35%	48%	46%	49%	48%	68%	29%
Provide teachers with constructive feedback.	63%	32%	60%	37%	61%	34%	79%	21%

	1 Year		2 Years		3 Years		4+ Years	
	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A
Support teachers to improve instruction.**	54%	34%	54%	37%	62%	34%	73%	27%
Address the social-emotional learning needs of teachers and students.	48%	36%	39%	48%	39%	52%	53%	39%
Engage my school's faculty in discussions about pedagogy.	47%	39%	40%	50%	43%	49%	50%	47%
<i>I believe MLDS...</i>								
Contributes to improved student achievement at my school.	48%	39%	37%	53%	53%	38%	53%	38%
Makes me more likely to stay as a school leader in Missouri.	52%	41%	45%	37%	51%	40%	61%	33%
Supports the growth of school leaders in Missouri.** ****	58%	36%	56%	39%	66%	34%	77%	23%
This Year's Experience   <i>This year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, MLDS helps me to...</i>								
Remain focused on instruction and student learning.	54%	41%	46%	46%	44%	48%	53%	38%
Address the social and emotional needs of students and teachers.	47%	36%	34%	50%	37%	46%	40%	38%
Support teachers and students to teach and learn within different environments (e.g., in-school, blended, or remote).	46%	39%	35%	52%	37%	44%	46%	37%
Engage in learning activities that are relevant and applicable to my school.	49%	43%	40%	51%	51%	41%	52%	43%
Learn through a blend of in-person and remote training formats.	47%	34%	45%	43%	46%	43%	42%	45%
Learn about research-based practices and strategies on leadership development, instruction, and student learning.	52%	37%	48%	47%	53%	41%	62%	34%
Support from MLDS Specialists and Mentors   <i>The MLDS specialists in my Regional Professional Development Center...</i>								
Understand schools like mine.	63%	30%	57%	33%	64%	26%	74%	22%
Help me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	63%	33%	61%	34%	62%	33%	74%	24%
Effectively support me in my leadership role.	65%	30%	62%	32%	67%	29%	77%	20%
<i>My mentor...</i>								
Understands schools like mine.	65%	23%	67%	29%	60%	33%	63%	31%

	1 Year		2 Years		3 Years		4+ Years	
	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A
Helps me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	63%	25%	62%	30%	55%	37%	67%	29%
Effectively supports me in my leadership role.	65%	23%	62%	32%	58%	37%	69%	25%

*Note.* The question was, “How many years, in total, have you participated in the MLDS program? (If 2021–22 is your first year in MLDS, mark “1 year.” As the percentages of MLDS principals who disagree or strongly disagree with the survey questions were very small and there are four groups, the table shows only the percentages of MLDS principals who strongly agree (SA), and agree (A) with the survey items. N (1 year) = 132. N (2 years) = 94. N (3 years) = 87. N (4 or more years) = 66. Responses to survey questions were not required, therefore the numbers of respondents may vary throughout the survey questions. \* indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level between “1 Year” and “3 Years”, \*\* between “1 Year” and “4+ Years”, and \*\*\*\* between “2 Years” and “4+ Years”.

**Table 12. Perceptions of MLDS Specialists, 2021–22**

	n	A	U	D
<b>Overall Perceptions</b>				
The purpose of MLDS is clear to me.	27	100%	0%	0%
I know where to get information about MLDS.	27	100%	0%	0%
I receive information about MLDS on a regular basis.	27	100%	0%	0%
Principal(s) receive support from my RPDC in applying what they have learned from MLDS at their school.	27	93%	7%	0%
MLDS helps principals to see the connection between developing their leadership skills and improving student learning at their school.	27	93%	7%	0%
I am aware that principals can upgrade their administrator certificates by completing MLDS micro-credentials.	27	100%	0%	0%
Completing MLDS micro-credentials helps to improve principals’ leadership practices.	27	52%	48%	0%
<b>Fidelity of Implementation</b>				
The level of support provided by MLDS (e.g., number of sessions or contacts, frequency and duration of sessions) is appropriate for building principals’ leadership capacity.	27	96%	4%	0%
The MLDS methods (e.g., regional meetings, state conferences, learning labs, one-to-one mentoring and coaching) are helpful in developing principals’ leadership skills.	27	100%	0%	0%
Principals are regularly using what they learn from MLDS at their school.	27	85%	15%	0%
<b>Professional Development</b>				
MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices.	27	96%	4%	0%
The professional development content is relevant to principals’ needs as school leaders.	27	96%	4%	0%
I help principals to apply the content to practical situations.	27	96%	4%	0%

	n	A	U	D
I understand the schools of the principals I support.	27	100%	0%	0%
The training materials are relevant to the principals.	27	93%	7%	0%
Principals use what they learn from MLDS to strengthen their leadership practices.	27	93%	7%	0%
Principals network with other MLDS principals.	27	100%	0%	0%
MLDS professional development promotes a common leadership vocabulary in Missouri.	27	96%	4%	0%
<b>Benefits and Value   I believe MLDS...</b>				
Provides opportunities for principals to grow as professionals.	27	100%	0%	0%
Promotes collaboration among principals.	27	100%	0%	0%
Provides customized support to address principals' specific needs.	27	96%	0%	4%
Strengthens principals' instructional leadership practices.	27	96%	4%	0%
Makes principals better school leaders.	27	96%	4%	0%
<b>Impact   I believe MLDS increases principals' ability to...</b>				
Observe teachers in the classroom.	27	100%	0%	0%
Identify different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	27	93%	7%	0%
Describe different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	26	89%	4%	4%
Provide teachers with constructive feedback.	27	96%	4%	0%
Support teachers to improve instruction.	27	96%	4%	0%
Address the social-emotional learning needs of teachers and students.	27	85%	11%	4%
Engage their school's faculty in discussions about pedagogy.	27	93%	4%	4%
<b>I believe MLDS...</b>				
Contributes to improved student achievement at the schools.	27	85%	15%	0%
Makes principals more likely to stay as school leaders in Missouri.	27	93%	7%	0%
Supports the growth of school leaders in Missouri.	27	100%	0%	0%
<b>This Year's Experience   This year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, MLDS helps principals to...</b>				
Remain focused on instruction and student learning.	27	93%	4%	4%
Address the social and emotional needs of students and teachers.	27	81%	15%	4%
Support teachers and students to teach and learn within different environments (e.g., in-school, blended, or remote).	27	89%	7%	4%
Engage in learning activities that are relevant and applicable to their school.	27	100%	0%	0%
Learn through a blend of in-person and remote training formats.	27	81%	19%	0%
Learn about research-based practices and strategies on leadership development, instruction, and student learning.	27	100%	0%	0%

	n	A	U	D
Support from Mentors to MLDS Principals   <i>Mentors in my RPDC...</i>				
Understand schools like the MLDS principals'.	27	96%	4%	0%
Help principals to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	27	96%	4%	0%
Effectively support principals in their leadership roles.	27	96%	4%	0%

**Table 13. Perceptions of Classroom Teachers, 2021–22**

	N	A	U	D
Effects of MLDS on Principals' Professional Development Support   <i>The professional development that I receive from my principal...</i>				
Is useful to me.	515	85%	6%	9%
Is of high quality.	510	85%	9%	6%
Is relevant to my work.	512	84%	10%	6%
Focuses on research-based instructional practices.	511	84%	11%	5%
Is differentiated to meet my needs as an instructor.	514	72%	16%	13%
Helps me to use formative and summative assessments data to plan instruction.	514	74%	13%	13%
Effects of MLDS on Principals' Leadership Practices   <i>My principal...</i>				
Promotes teacher reflection on instructional practices.	514	91%	4%	4%
Encourages instruction-focused dialogue between teachers.	513	91%	5%	4%
Encourages instruction-focused dialogue between teachers and school leaders.	512	87%	6%	7%
Promotes collaboration between teachers.	513	90%	6%	4%
Promotes collaboration between teachers and school leaders.	512	83%	10%	8%
Provides constructive feedback on ways to improve my instructional practices.	511	85%	7%	8%
Uses the results of my evaluation to inform my professional development plan for next year.	513	81%	11%	8%
Focuses on instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.	512	81%	13%	5%
Effects of MLDS on the School   <i>My principal...</i>				
Effectively communicates the school's core values to all stakeholders.	512	91%	5%	4%
Implements policies and practices that promote culturally responsive pedagogy.	510	84%	10%	6%
Recruits staff with diverse backgrounds.	512	75%	18%	6%
Builds positive relationships between students and the staff.	512	89%	5%	5%
Promotes a collaborative culture among the staff.	511	88%	5%	7%
Encourages teachers to take leadership roles.	512	86%	8%	5%



	N	A	U	D
Engages in two-way communication with families and the community.	509	91%	6%	3%
Effects of MLDS on Classroom Teachers   <i>My principal enhances my capacity to...</i>				
Select appropriate instructional practices to meet the needs of my students.	513	87%	8%	6%
Differentiate instruction for all my students.	513	87%	8%	5%
Build the critical thinking skills of all my students.	512	87%	8%	5%
Address the social-emotional learning needs of all my students.	511	89%	7%	4%
Overall Effects of MLDS   <i>My principal's leadership...</i>				
Encourages teachers to come to my school.	514	82%	11%	7%
Encourages teachers to stay at my school.	514	78%	11%	11%
Contributes to improvement in student achievement at my school.	514	89%	7%	4%

Table 14. Perceptions of Classroom Teachers by RPDC Region, 2021–22

	Southeast				Other RPDCs			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Effects of MLDS on Principals' Professional Development Support   <i>The professional development that I receive from my principal...</i>								
Is useful to me.*	116	49%	44%	5%	399	30%	53%	7%
Is of high quality.*	114	49%	45%	5%	396	34%	48%	11%
Is relevant to my work.*	114	51%	38%	9%	398	32%	51%	10%
Is differentiated to meet my needs as an instructor.*	115	47%	39%	8%	399	26%	42%	18%
Helps me to use formative and summative assessments data to plan instruction.*	115	43%	37%	10%	399	28%	44%	14%
Focuses on research-based instructional practices.*	115	50%	41%	6%	396	35%	47%	12%
Effects of MLDS on Principals' Leadership Practices   <i>My principal...</i>								
Promotes teacher reflection on instructional practices.*	115	64%	33%	2%	399	49%	41%	5%
Encourages instruction-focused dialogue between teachers.*	115	68%	29%	3%	398	48%	42%	6%
Encourages instruction-focused dialogue between teachers and school leaders.*	115	64%	30%	3%	397	40%	45%	7%
Promotes collaboration between teachers.*	115	77%	20%	2%	398	52%	36%	7%

	Southeast				Other RPDCs			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Promotes collaboration between teachers and school leaders.*	115	71%	21%	5%	397	41%	39%	11%
Provides constructive feedback on ways to improve my instructional practices.*	115	67%	29%	3%	396	42%	39%	8%
Uses the results of my evaluation to inform my professional development plan for next year.*	115	59%	29%	9%	398	41%	38%	11%
Focuses on instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.*	115	57%	31%	10%	397	42%	38%	14%
Effects of MLDS on the School   <i>My principal...</i>								
Effectively communicates the school's core values to all stakeholders.*	115	70%	28%	2%	397	43%	46%	6%
Implements policies and practices that promote culturally responsive pedagogy.*	115	68%	25%	5%	395	42%	40%	11%
Recruits staff with diverse backgrounds.*	115	53%	24%	17%	397	36%	39%	18%
Builds positive relationships between students and the staff.*	115	81%	18%	1%	397	52%	34%	7%
Promotes a collaborative culture among the staff.*	115	76%	23%	0%	396	48%	37%	6%
Encourages teachers to take leadership roles.*	115	70%	27%	3%	397	47%	36%	10%
Engages in two-way communication with families and the community.*	115	77%	23%	0%	394	50%	38%	8%
Effects of MLDS on Classroom Teachers   <i>My principal enhances my capacity to...</i>								
Select appropriate instructional practices to meet the needs of my students.*	116	66%	28%	4%	397	39%	46%	9%
Differentiate instruction for all my students.*	116	65%	29%	4%	397	38%	47%	10%
Build the critical thinking skills of all my students.*	116	64%	28%	4%	396	40%	45%	9%
Address the social-emotional learning needs of all my students.*	115	65%	30%	4%	396	41%	46%	7%
Overall Effects of MLDS   <i>My principal's leadership...</i>								
Encourages teachers to come to my school.*	116	69%	28%	3%	398	43%	35%	13%
Encourages teachers to stay at my school.*	116	76%	20%	4%	398	42%	30%	13%
Contributes to improvement in student achievement at my school.*	116	75%	22%	3%	398	49%	38%	8%

*Note.* As the percentages of classroom teachers who disagree or strongly disagree with the survey questions were very small, the table shows only the percentages of classroom teachers who strongly agree (SA), agree (A), and are undecided (U) about the survey questions. \* indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level between the two groups.

Table 15. Perceptions of Classroom Teachers by School Level, 2021–22

	Elementary			Middle			High		
	n	A	U	n	A	U	n	A	U
Effects of MLDS on Principals' Professional Development Support   <i>The professional development that I receive from my principal...</i>									
Is useful to me.	235	86%	5%	97	90%	5%	183	81%	9%
Is of high quality.	232	86%	9%	97	90%	6%	181	81%	12%
Is relevant to my work.	234	87%	8%	96	89%	4%	182	79%	14%
Is differentiated to meet my needs as an instructor.	235	73%	15%	97	74%	15%	182	68%	16%
Helps me to use formative and summative assessments data to plan instruction.	235	72%	14%	97	81%	8%	182	72%	13%
Focuses on research-based instructional practices.	233	84%	11%	97	90%	6%	181	81%	12%
Effects of MLDS on Principals' Leadership Practices   <i>My principal...</i>									
Promotes teacher reflection on instructional practices.	235	92%	4%	97	91%	6%	182	91%	3%
Encourages instruction-focused dialogue between teachers.	235	92%	5%	96	90%	6%	182	91%	4%
Encourages instruction-focused dialogue between teachers and school leaders.	235	88%	6%	97	90%	4%	180	84%	7%
Promotes collaboration between teachers.	234	91%	6%	97	93%	3%	182	88%	7%
Promotes collaboration between teachers and school leaders.	234	82%	12%	97	86%	7%	181	83%	8%
Provides constructive feedback on ways to improve my instructional practices.	234	87%	6%	96	80%	9%	181	85%	7%
Uses the results of my evaluation to inform my professional development plan for next year.	234	84%	7%	97	80%	13%	182	78%	14%
Focuses on instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.	233	85%	12%	97	76%	18%	182	80%	13%
Effects of MLDS on the School   <i>My principal...</i>									
Effectively communicates the school's core values to all stakeholders.	234	89%	6%	97	91%	3%	181	92%	4%
Implements policies and practices that promote culturally responsive pedagogy.	232	83%	11%	97	89%	5%	181	83%	11%
Recruits staff with diverse backgrounds.	234	77%	19%	97	76%	16%	181	72%	18%
Builds positive relationships between students and the staff.	234	91%	6%	97	84%	5%	181	90%	6%

	Elementary			Middle			High		
	n	A	U	n	A	U	n	A	U
Promotes a collaborative culture among the staff.	233	88%	5%	97	86%	6%	181	91%	4%
Encourages teachers to take leadership roles.	234	86%	9%	97	82%	10%	181	89%	7%
Engages in two-way communication with families and the community.	233	91%	6%	96	89%	7%	180	92%	7%
Effects of MLDS on Classroom Teachers   <i>My principal enhances my capacity to...</i>									
Select appropriate instructional practices to meet the needs of my students.	233	87%	8%	97	87%	7%	183	86%	8%
Differentiate instruction for all my students.	233	87%	9%	97	89%	6%	183	86%	8%
Build the critical thinking skills of all my students.	233	89%	8%	96	89%	7%	183	84%	8%
Address the social-emotional learning needs of all my students.	233	89%	8%	96	88%	6%	182	90%	5%
Overall Effects of MLDS   <i>My principal's leadership...</i>									
Encourages teachers to come to my school.	234	80%	12%	97	82%	8%	183	85%	10%
Encourages teachers to stay at my school.	234	76%	14%	97	80%	5%	183	78%	11%
Contributes to improvement in student achievement at my school.	234	90%	5%	97	90%	5%	183	87%	10%

Note. This table shows only the percentages of classroom teachers who agree (A), a composite of strongly agree and agree, and are undecided (U) about the survey questions. Kruskal-Wallis H tests showed that there were not statistically significant differences in teachers' responses to the survey questions by school level.

Table 16. Perceptions of Classroom Teachers by Race/Ethnicity, 2021–22

	White				Other Race/Ethnicity			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Effects of MLDS on Principals' Professional Development Support   <i>The professional development that I receive from my principal...</i>								
Is useful to me.	446	35%	50%	7%	40	28%	55%	3%
Is of high quality.	442	39%	46%	9%	40	30%	55%	8%
Is relevant to my work.	443	37%	47%	10%	40	28%	55%	8%
Is differentiated to meet my needs as an instructor.	445	31%	41%	16%	40	25%	43%	13%
Helps me to use formative and summative assessments data to plan instruction.	445	32%	43%	13%	40	23%	45%	13%

	White				Other Race/Ethnicity			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Focuses on research-based instructional practices.	442	38%	46%	11%	40	33%	55%	8%
Effects of MLDS on Principals' Leadership Practices   <i>My principal...</i>								
Promotes teacher reflection on instructional practices.	445	54%	38%	3%	40	43%	38%	18%
Encourages instruction-focused dialogue between teachers.	444	53%	38%	5%	40	48%	40%	8%
Encourages instruction-focused dialogue between teachers and school leaders.	443	47%	40%	7%	40	35%	50%	5%
Promotes collaboration between teachers.	444	59%	31%	6%	40	53%	38%	3%
Promotes collaboration between teachers and school leaders.	443	50%	33%	9%	40	35%	45%	10%
Provides constructive feedback on ways to improve my instructional practices.	442	50%	36%	7%	40	38%	38%	8%
Uses the results of my evaluation to inform my professional development plan for next year.	444	46%	37%	10%	40	43%	28%	15%
Focuses on instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.	443	47%	35%	13%	40	40%	38%	15%
Effects of MLDS on the School   <i>My principal...</i>								
Effectively communicates the school's core values to all stakeholders.	444	51%	40%	5%	39	41%	44%	8%
Implements policies and practices that promote culturally responsive pedagogy.	442	50%	36%	9%	39	38%	33%	18%
Recruits staff with diverse backgrounds.	444	40%	35%	19%	39	44%	36%	10%
Builds positive relationships between students and the staff.*	444	61%	28%	5%	39	44%	41%	10%
Promotes a collaborative culture among the staff.	444	55%	33%	5%	38	50%	37%	8%
Encourages teachers to take leadership roles.	444	54%	33%	8%	39	46%	38%	13%
Engages in two-way communication with families and the community.	441	58%	34%	5%	39	51%	33%	13%
Effects of MLDS on Classroom Teachers   <i>My principal enhances my capacity to...</i>								
Select appropriate instructional practices to meet the needs of my students.	444	47%	40%	8%	40	30%	55%	10%
Differentiate instruction for all my students.	444	46%	41%	9%	40	30%	53%	10%
Build the critical thinking skills of all my students.*	443	47%	40%	8%	40	28%	55%	10%

	White				Other Race/Ethnicity			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Address the social-emotional learning needs of all my students.*	442	48%	41%	7%	40	33%	50%	8%
Overall Effects of MLDS   <i>My principal's leadership...</i>								
Encourages teachers to come to my school.	445	50%	33%	10%	40	40%	35%	15%
Encourages teachers to stay at my school.	445	51%	28%	11%	40	40%	33%	13%
Contributes to improvement in student achievement at my school.	445	56%	33%	6%	40	45%	38%	15%

Note. As the percentages of classroom teachers who disagree or strongly disagree with the survey questions were very small, the table shows only the percentages of classroom teachers who strongly agree (SA), agree (A), and are undecided (U) about the survey questions. \* indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level between the two groups.

Table 17. Perceptions of Classroom Teachers by Experience with the current MLDS Principal, 2021–22

	0–3 Years			4–6 Years			7+ Years		
	n	A	U	n	A	U	n	A	U
Effects of MLDS on Principals' Professional Development Support   <i>The professional development that I receive from my principal...</i>									
Is useful to me.	304	85%	6%	141	85%	8%	69	88%	6%
Is of high quality.	303	84%	9%	138	83%	12%	68	90%	4%
Is relevant to my work.	302	83%	9%	141	87%	11%	68	84%	9%
Is differentiated to meet my needs as an instructor.	304	71%	15%	141	70%	17%	68	78%	13%
Helps me to use formative and summative assessments data to plan instruction.	304	72%	13%	141	75%	13%	68	79%	12%
Focuses on research-based instructional practices.	302	83%	11%	140	86%	10%	68	84%	9%
Effects of MLDS on Principals' Leadership Practices   <i>My principal...</i>									
Promotes teacher reflection on instructional practices.	304	90%	4%	141	92%	6%	68	96%	1%
Encourages instruction-focused dialogue between teachers.	303	90%	6%	141	94%	3%	68	93%	4%
Encourages instruction-focused dialogue between teachers and school leaders.	302	85%	7%	141	91%	6%	68	85%	6%
Promotes collaboration between teachers.	303	89%	6%	141	91%	7%	68	93%	6%
Promotes collaboration between teachers and school leaders.	302	82%	9%	141	82%	15%	68	88%	3%

	0-3 Years			4-6 Years			7+ Years		
	n	A	U	n	A	U	n	A	U
Provides constructive feedback on ways to improve my instructional practices.	301	83%	7%	141	89%	6%	68	85%	7%
Uses the results of my evaluation to inform my professional development plan for next year.	303	79%	13%	141	85%	7%	68	82%	9%
Focuses on instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.	302	78%	16%	141	86%	13%	68	87%	4%
<b>Effects of MLDS on the School   My principal...</b>									
Effectively communicates the school's core values to all stakeholders.**	302	91%	4%	141	88%	9%	68	93%	1%
Implements policies and practices that promote culturally responsive pedagogy.	301	84%	10%	140	84%	11%	68	88%	6%
Recruits staff with diverse backgrounds.	302	75%	19%	141	80%	16%	68	69%	21%
Builds positive relationships between students and the staff.	302	88%	7%	141	90%	4%	68	93%	3%
Promotes a collaborative culture among the staff.	302	87%	5%	140	89%	4%	68	90%	4%
Encourages teachers to take leadership roles.	302	86%	8%	141	87%	10%	68	87%	7%
Engages in two-way communication with families and the community.**	300	92%	5%	140	87%	10%	68	91%	6%
<b>Effects of MLDS on Classroom Teachers   My principal enhances my capacity to...</b>									
Select appropriate instructional practices to meet the needs of my students.	302	85%	8%	141	88%	9%	69	90%	6%
Differentiate instruction for all my students.*	302	85%	10%	141	89%	8%	69	93%	3%
Build the critical thinking skills of all my students.	302	85%	9%	140	89%	8%	69	91%	4%
Address the social-emotional learning needs of all my students.	301	89%	6%	140	87%	10%	69	91%	4%
<b>Overall Effects of MLDS   My principal's leadership...</b>									
Encourages teachers to come to my school.	303	83%	10%	141	80%	13%	69	84%	9%
Encourages teachers to stay at my school.	303	79%	9%	141	74%	16%	69	80%	12%
Contributes to improvement in student achievement at my school.	303	87%	7%	141	90%	7%	69	93%	4%

*Note.* This table shows only the percentages of classroom teachers who agree (A), a composite of strongly agree and agree, and are undecided (U) about the survey questions. \* indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level between the “0-3 Years” group and the “7+ Years” group. \*\* indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level between the “4-6 Years” group and the “7+ Years” group.



Table 18. Perceptions of Classroom Teachers by Teaching Experience, 2021–22

	0–3 Yrs		4–6 Yrs		7–9 Yrs		10+ Yrs	
	A	U	A	U	A	U	A	U
Effects of MLDS on Principals’ Professional Development Support   <i>The professional development that I receive from my principal...</i>								
Is useful to me.	85%	5%	83%	8%	84%	5%	86%	6%
Is of high quality.	86%	6%	78%	16%	84%	8%	86%	9%
Is relevant to my work.	85%	7%	80%	13%	84%	7%	85%	10%
Is differentiated to meet my needs as an instructor.	67%	16%	65%	23%	70%	11%	75%	15%
Helps me to use formative and summative assessments data to plan instruction.	62%	19%	77%	10%	76%	7%	76%	14%
Focuses on research-based instructional practices.	79%	16%	78%	15%	85%	8%	87%	8%
Effects of MLDS on Principals’ Leadership Practices   <i>My principal...</i>								
Promotes teacher reflection on instructional practices.	90%	4%	89%	7%	92%	4%	92%	3%
Encourages instruction-focused dialogue between teachers.	87%	9%	89%	6%	95%	3%	92%	4%
Encourages instruction-focused dialogue between teachers and school leaders.	83%	10%	84%	7%	88%	1%	89%	6%
Promotes collaboration between teachers.	88%	6%	87%	8%	93%	3%	91%	6%
Promotes collaboration between teachers and school leaders.	81%	10%	77%	16%	85%	5%	84%	9%
Provides constructive feedback on ways to improve my instructional practices.	80%	5%	83%	8%	85%	3%	87%	8%
Uses the results of my evaluation to inform my professional development plan for next year.	75%	16%	80%	10%	81%	7%	83%	10%
Focuses on instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.	74%	22%	80%	17%	81%	9%	84%	11%
Effects of MLDS on the School   <i>My principal...</i>								
Effectively communicates the school’s core values to all stakeholders.	91%	4%	89%	10%	91%	4%	91%	4%
Implements policies and practices that promote culturally responsive pedagogy.	87%	10%	79%	13%	85%	7%	84%	10%
Recruits staff with diverse backgrounds.	75%	18%	72%	20%	77%	18%	76%	18%
Builds positive relationships between students and the staff.	90%	2%	83%	8%	93%	4%	89%	6%



	0-3 Yrs		4-6 Yrs		7-9 Yrs		10+ Yrs	
	A	U	A	U	A	U	A	U
Promotes a collaborative culture among the staff.	90%	2%	87%	5%	89%	4%	88%	6%
Encourages teachers to take leadership roles.	87%	9%	89%	7%	89%	3%	84%	10%
Engages in two-way communication with families and the community.	93%	4%	88%	10%	93%	4%	89%	7%
Effects of MLDS on Classroom Teachers   <i>My principal enhances my capacity to...</i>								
Select appropriate instructional practices to meet the needs of my students.	83%	9%	81%	12%	86%	5%	90%	7%
Differentiate instruction for all my students.	82%	12%	83%	10%	89%	5%	89%	8%
Build the critical thinking skills of all my students.	84%	9%	86%	7%	91%	5%	88%	9%
Address the social-emotional learning needs of all my students.	88%	5%	84%	9%	91%	4%	90%	7%
Overall Effects of MLDS   <i>My principal's leadership...</i>								
Encourages teachers to come to my school.	86%	5%	81%	12%	80%	12%	82%	12%
Encourages teachers to stay at my school.	80%	6%	76%	12%	77%	12%	78%	13%
Contributes to improvement in student achievement at my school.	87%	8%	82%	14%	91%	4%	91%	5%

*Note.* This table shows only the percentages of classroom teachers who agree (A), a composite of strongly agree and agree, and are undecided (U) about the survey questions. Kruskal-Wallis H tests showed that there were not statistically significant differences in teachers' responses to the survey questions by teaching experience.