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Marked Impact, Anticipated Refinements: An Evaluation of the Missouri Leadership Development System

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September 2023

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Table of Contents

Summary of the Study and Findings

This report presents learnings from the perspectives of frontline educators about the implementation of the Missouri Leadership Development System (MLDS). This annual evaluation was conducted by the Region 12 Comprehensive Center (R12CC), funded under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. From 2018–19 to 2022–23, principals and superintendents indicated MLDS effectively develops and supports school leaders. Teacher leaders also believed their principals' participation in MLDS positively contributes to improvement in classroom instruction and student learning. Findings from this study support the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in facilitating the professional growth of all school leaders in the state.

Introduction and Context

MLDS is "one of the nation's most comprehensive statewide principal development initiatives" (Duffrin, 2022). The primary purpose of the program is "to develop and support effective school leaders" (DESE, 2020, p. 2). The MLDS leadership competencies are aligned to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (DESE, 2020).

In 2022–23, MLDS facilitated the professional growth of 1,628 educators from 425 school districts, 15 charter schools, and 58 non-public schools.[1] The 1,556 participants, for whom the position information is available, included 863 principals (55.5%), 552 assistant principals (35.5%), and 141 other educators (9.0%).[2]

MLDS supports participants from Aspiring (pre-certificated), to Emerging (initial career entry), through Developing (practicing), and ultimately to Transformational (highest level) leaders. It provides three layers of training and support: leadership content learning, implementation support through mentors and specialists, and regional and state networking (see Appendix A for the MLDS organizational chart and Appendix B for more information about the MLDS career levels).

Literature Review. MLDS is firmly grounded in rigorous research. An extensive body of empirical studies has demonstrated effective principal leadership contributes to improvement in student achievement, highlighting the importance of retaining principals (Branch et al., 2013; Gates et al., 2019; Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis et al., 2010; Nunnery et al., 2011).

When principals receive inadequate professional development or support, however, they are more likely to leave the profession (Levin & Bradley, 2019). The attrition of effective principals, in turn, lowers school achievement and increases teacher turnover (Bartanen et al., 2019). These negative effects are often greater among high-poverty and urban schools (DeMatthews et al., 2022).

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[1] Data were shared via email correspondence from state officials on June 28, 2023.
[2] R12CC conducted the calculations based on the raw data shared from state officials on June 28, 2023.

By providing principals with effective leadership development and support, programs akin to MLDS facilitate the professional growth of principals as instructional leaders, and improve principal retention and student learning (Gates et al., 2019; Jacob et al., 2015).

The remainder of the report is structured as follows. First, we describe the research questions and methodology. Then, we discuss findings and key issues. Last, we present recommendations, which are followed by tables and figures in the appendices.

Research Questions

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

- » RQ1: What are the respective perceptions of principals, superintendents, and specialists[3] about MLDS?
- » RQ2: To what extent is MLDS productively supporting principals to address leadership challenges they are in?
- » RQ3: How do principals' perceptions of MLDS differ?
- » RQ4: What are teacher leaders' perceptions of their principals' participation in MLDS?

RQ1 includes a number of sub-questions on (a) overall perceptions, (b) fidelity of implementation, (c) professional development, (d) benefits and value, (e) impacts, (f) enhancing factors, and (g) emerging issues. RQ2 examines the leadership challenges that principals are facing today and the extent to which the MLDS learnings equip principals to address those issues. RQ3 compares principals' survey responses by school CSI (i.e., Comprehensive Support and Improvement) status, community type (city, suburban, rural), race/ethnicity, and years of experience with MLDS. RQ4 explores teacher leaders' perceived impacts of their principals' participation in MLDS.

Methodology

R12CC employed a mixed-methods approach for this evaluation by collecting a variety of data from May to July 2023. The multiple data sources include (a) statewide surveys of MLDS principals, superintendents, and specialists; (b) interviews with MLDS principals, superintendents, specialists, and teacher leaders; (c) fall 2022 and spring 2023 MLDS participant satisfaction surveys administered by DESE; and (d) a review of MLDS-related documents and videos.

Principal, Superintendent, and Specialist Surveys. In partnership with DESE, R12CC developed and administered three web-based, anonymous surveys for MLDS principals, superintendents, and specialists. The principal survey included 41 Likert-scale questions and eight open-ended questions. The superintendent and specialist surveys included a similar set of Likert-scale and open-ended questions (see Appendix C for more details).

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[3] 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 school district may choose to utilize services from any RPDC. RPDCs are supported by MLDS specialists.

By RPDC region, specialists identified and invited the MLDS participants for the principal survey, and superintendents for the superintendent survey. One RPDC chose to send the survey links to only participants at the emerging level (Year 1 or 2 MLDS content) and their respective superintendents. All specialists were invited to take the specialist survey.

The surveys went live on May 1st and were closed on May 26, 2023. Table 1 presents the response rates, and Tables 2, 3, and 4 show the characteristics of the respondents.

The analyses of the principal, superintendent, and specialist survey responses included five years of survey data (i.e., 2018–19 to 2022–23). The most recent data, collected in 2022–23, were examined along with responses from the previous four years (i.e., 2018–19 to 2021–22).

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 (McKight & Najab, 2010). For the written comments, R12CC conducted thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify common themes and key issues.

Responses of MLDS participants to the 2022–23 principal survey were 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 were grouped together. In discussions of the survey responses that follow, "principals" refers to current MLDS participants at all four career levels in all three position groups, and "superintendents" refers to MLDS superintendents.[4]

Interviews. R12CC conducted 55 interviews in 2022–23 (see Table 5). The interviewees included 20 MLDS principals and 17 superintendents (all identified by specialists), five specialists (identified by DESE), and 13 teacher leaders (identified by MLDS principals). R12CC conducted thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify common themes and key issues.

MLDS Participant Satisfaction Survey. R12CC reviewed the responses of MLDS participants to the satisfaction survey which DESE administered in fall 2022 and spring 2023. The survey included 11 Likert-scale questions and three open-ended questions.[5]

Review of Documents and Videos. R12CC reviewed multiple MLDS-related documents. It included the guides for participants at all four levels (DESE, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019), the MLDS executive summary (DESE, 2020), an MLDS flyer (DESE, n.d.-a), and an introductory infographic (DESE, n.d.-b). R12CC also reviewed the mentoring support videos (DESE, n.d.-c) created by DESE.

Limitations of the Study. This evaluation focuses primarily on the perceptions of MLDS principals and superintendents across the years. As the MLDS evaluation surveys were anonymous, R12CC was unable to track educator responses over time. Therefore, the survey data are not strictly

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[4] 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 10 provides the responses of the specialists.

[5] Responses to the fall 2022 and spring 2023 participant satisfaction surveys, administered by DESE, are highly consistent with those to the principal survey conducted administered by R12CC.

longitudinal. The changes observed could be due to different groups of respondents taking the survey in different years. In addition, only a limited number of teacher leaders were interviewed for this year's evaluation.

Despite these limitations, consistent trends related to MLDS implementation and impacts emerge from the data. Findings of this study help DESE to further strengthen the program.

Findings

RQ1–A: Overall Perceptions

Across the five years, principals and superintendents indicated they are well-informed about MLDS, and principals are supported to apply MLDS learnings at their school.

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 (94–97%), and they receive MLDS-related information on a regular basis (93–97%). Superintendents shared these perspectives (see Figure 2).

Across the five years, principals (96–97%) and superintendents (84–96%) also believed MLDS helps principals to see the connection between developing leadership skills and improving student learning (see Figures 3 and 4). Principals indicated that when they apply their MLDS learnings at their school, they receive support from their RPDC (87–93%) and their district (88–92%); superintendents (90–97%) concurred. In interviews and survey comments, principals and superintendents reinforced these findings.

> *MLDS guides me in strengthening teacher-to-administrator communication and relationship. We are building trust among one another. Those positive relationships are key to increasing student achievement.*
>
> -Principal

> *MLDS is designed to have administrators collaborate, observe, and partner with a colleague in their field. It takes a lot of time out of the building but that's okay. We have structures to support them.*
>
> -Superintendent

Figure 4 also shows most superintendents (66%, 78%, 75%, 86%, and 76%, respectively, across the five years) believed MLDS-related discussions with their principal(s) have influenced districtwide programs and practices in their district.

RQ1–B: Fidelity of Implementation

Principals and superintendents believed MLDS is implemented as designed.

As Figure 5 shows, principals agreed the level of support that MLDS provides is appropriate for building their leadership capacity (93–98%), and the MLDS methods are helpful (93–99%). They

indicated they regularly use their MLDS learnings at their school (90–95%). In interviews and survey comments, principals and superintendents reinforced these findings.

> *The MLDS materials are applicable and practical. All the platforms are effective. The labs in the school let you apply and practice. The virtual [sessions] help because we are all busy. All [MLDS activities and resources] are used to the fullest capacity and delivered with intent and with planning.*
>
> -Principal

> *Principals bring back pedagogy from MLDS and practice ideas at their school. They apply the new learnings because they are valuable.*
>
> -Superintendent

Specialists also agreed MLDS is being implemented with fidelity. They believed the unique characteristics of the program (e.g., mentoring, statewide curriculum, ongoing and continuous support), individually and collectively, contribute to the effectiveness of MLDS.

> *The current labs and treatment programs are implemented as designed. I and the other specialists walked through the training manuals recently to ensure that we are following things as designed.*
>
> -Specialist

> *One unique aspect of MLDS is the connection between the MLDS-assigned mentor and the MLDS curriculum. The inter-relatedness of these two aspects of MLDS improves the experience of the mentee.*
>
> -Specialist

> *MLDS helps leaders take actions to improve their schools with ongoing and continuous support, which is different from other programs.*
>
> -Specialist

RQ1–C: MLDS Professional Development

Principals and superintendents were highly positive about the quality, usefulness, and relevance of MLDS professional development.

As Figure 6 shows, nearly all principals (98–100%) indicated MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices. They also believed the MLDS content (96–100%) and materials (95–98%) are relevant to their needs. In interviews and survey comments, principals and superintendents reinforced these findings.

> *MLDS is guided by research. The materials and the distribution of academic articles have been applicable to what we are doing as school administrators.*
>
> -Principal

> *The MLDS training materials (toolkit and curriculum) are very relevant and valuable. The tools have helped my principal to work through some specific issues.*
>
> -Superintendent

Principals (95–98%) also indicated they are intentionally using their MLDS learnings to strengthen their leadership practices, and they (92–96%) believed MLDS trainings promote a common leadership vocabulary in Missouri (see Figure 7).

> *MLDS allowed me to be more intentional, understanding the whys. It also supported me in prioritizing building needs and aligning problem-solving strategies.*
>
> -Principal

> *When I was a teacher, my principal never came into my room and my evaluation was very quick and meaningless. It is not the case anymore when I handle evaluations now. I'm much more involved as a result of MLDS. The program has completely changed my viewpoint of what a principal is supposed to do. Instructional leadership is now in my realm of knowledge and my focus. It changed my entire perspective.*
>
> -Principal

> *My principal gives better feedback. He frequently gives more coaching because he is more comfortable as a result of MLDS. He puts what he has learned into practice.*
>
> -Superintendent

Being able to network with other principals has been consistently identified as a key feature of MLDS (Slotnik & Liang, 2019; Liang & Slotnik, 2020, 2021, 2022). Figure 7 shows across the years, most principals (84–94%) agreed they network with other principals.

RQ1-D: Benefits and Value of MLDS

Principals and superintendents believed participation in MLDS is beneficial and valuable.

As Figure 8 shows, principals agreed MLDS provides them with opportunities to grow as professionals (96–99%) and promotes peer collaboration (94–98%). Principals (87–92%) also believed the program provides customized support to address their needs. Superintendents concurred with the principals on the benefits and value of MLDS (see Figure 9).

> *MLDS provided me with networking opportunities to grow my leader capacity and learn from others. It helped me with strategies for teacher and student engagement.*
>
> -Principal

> *MLDS has developed my leadership skills from day one. Each treatment has been tailored to meet my specific needs.*
>
> -Principal

My principal looked forward to going to MLDS trainings. Most building principals do not want to go out of the building unless they know it is something they knew would help. MLDS lived up to its expectations.

<div align="right">-Superintendent</div>

Figures 10 and 11 show principals (95–98%) and superintendents (92–96%) agreed MLDS strengthens principals' instructional leadership practices. They also believed the program makes principals stronger leaders (95–97% for principals, and 89–96% for superintendents). In interviews and survey comments, principals and superintendents reinforced these findings.

MLDS has been instrumental in what I am trying to accomplish instructionally.

<div align="right">-Principal</div>

I would not be as effective without MLDS. They are a game changer. My group and cohort make it all work for me. I am far more effective because of MLDS.

<div align="right">-Principal</div>

My principal is more comfortable leading professional dialogues about instruction because he is more confident about what to look for in classroom observations.

<div align="right">-Superintendent</div>

RQ1-E: Multiple Impacts of MLDS

Principals and superintendents were highly positive about the program's impact on principals' instructional leadership, classroom instruction, and student achievement. They believed the program supports the growth and retention of school leaders.

Impacts of MLDS on Instructional Leadership and Classroom Instruction

Across the years, principals indicated MLDS strengthens their ability to identify (93–97%) and describe (93–96%) different levels of quality of instruction, provide teachers with constructive feedback (96–98%), and support teachers to improve instruction (93–96%); most superintendents (88–95%) concurred (see Figures 12, 13, and 14). In interviews and survey comments, principals and superintendents reinforced these perspectives.

My observation feedback has evolved because of MLDS. It is a dialogue. The single most effective thing is that it humanizes me. I use the 30-second feedback and teachers don't see it as a "gotcha" moment. It turns into a professional relationship.

<div align="right">-Principal</div>

There is more focus on classroom instruction. They know the look-fors. If teachers are struggling, they can coach them with an academic conversation.

<div align="right">-Superintendent</div>

As Figure 15 shows, principals believed MLDS increases their ability to observe teachers (93–96%), engage teachers in discussions about pedagogy (87–90%), and address the emotional wellbeing needs of teachers and students (86–88%). Most superintendents agreed with principals (83–93%).

> *Because of MLDS, I have been asking more reflective questions. Teachers are more reflective themselves. The questions focus on the work. I have seen a difference.*
>
> -Principal

> *We thought our students didn't have mental health issues because we were open during COVID. But I was wrong. Principals see lots of problems. From MLDS, they were able to address those problems.*
>
> -Superintendent

In addition, principals credited MLDS with improvement in school climate and culture.

> *Through my MLDS training, I have been able to bring back a cohesive work environment where we work for the same goal and talk about teacher instruction.*
>
> -Principal

> *In my building, the culture and climate has improved dramatically. I came into a tough situation. MLDS helped me work towards changing the negative climate.*
>
> -Principal

Principals and superintendents also believed MLDS contributes to improvement in student engagement and student behavior.

> *I have grown teacher instruction through craft conversations and positive feedback. Therefore, student engagement has improved.*
>
> -Principal

> *Student behavior has improved because they are more engaged. I attribute this to teachers having more information from the principals and MLDS.*
>
> -Superintendent

Impact of MLDS on Student Achievement

Figures 16 and 17 show principals' and superintendents' perceptions, respectively, of the impact of MLDS on student achievement. From 2018–19 to 2022–23, nearly all MLDS principal (89–93%) believed the program contributes to improvement in student achievement (Figure 16). Most superintendents (73–92%) shared the same positive perspective (Figure 17).

In interviews and survey comments, principals and superintendents elaborated on the relationship of improved student learning to principals' participation in MLDS.

I was able to improve trust between administration and teachers using the strategies I learned through MLDS. This allowed my teachers to take greater risks in the classroom and my students made great academic gains because of this.

-Principal

Our scores on the interim assessments increased and were above the national average. It's all from what my principal has done and from MLDS.

-Superintendent

Impacts of MLDS on School Leader Growth and Retention

Figures 16 and 17 also show the perceived impact of MLDS on the professional growth and retention of school leaders. Nearly all principals (96–98%) agreed the program supports the professional growth of school leaders in Missouri.

Participation in MLDS has helped me to grow in terms of providing feedback to teachers. I feel much more confident as an instructional leader, and I'm able to have difficult conversations when necessary.

-Principal

My principal has grown into an instructional leader, shifting away from merely managerial tasks.

-Superintendent

Across the five years, approximately nine out of ten principals indicated MLDS makes them more likely to stay as school leaders in the state (88–92%). Most superintendents concurred that MLDS supports the growth (95–97%) and retention (80–92%) of school leaders. In interviews and survey comments, principals and superintendents elaborated on their positive perceptions.

The influence of MLDS on school leader recruitment and retention is huge. The methods, treatments, support, network connections, are all important.

-Principal

MLDS is a good motivator. If candidates knew we offered this for our schools, it should be attractive to new leaders. All new principals should go through MLDS.

-Superintendent

MLDS is an excellent resource for retaining our school leaders.

-Superintendent

Many principals plan to stay with MLDS and continue to benefit from the program throughout their administrative career.

Keep doing what you are doing. Continue mentor check-ins and balance with coaching labs. Keep it relevant. I don't know what I would have done without MLDS. It was a huge godsend. It was the best PD I had as an educator in my 15 years.

-Principal

I have continued to stay with MLDS, and will continue to utilize MLDS, due to its organized, researched-based, useful leadership strategies.

-Principal

MLDS and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Principals and superintendents believed support from MLDS has been effective and impactful throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. As Figure 18 shows, from 2020–21 to 2022–23, principals agreed MLDS helps them to remain focused on teaching and learning (90–94%), and address the emotional wellbeing needs of students and teachers (83–85%). They also believed MLDS engages them with relevant and applicable learning activities (86–94%) through a blend of in-person and remote training formats (80–86%), and provides them with research-based practices and strategies (88–95%). Superintendents concurred with principals (see Figure 19).

RQ1-F: Enhancing Factors

Principals and superintendents continued to indicate all components of MLDS are effective, consistent with the previous evaluations (Slotnik & Liang, 2019; Liang & Slotnik, 2020, 2021, 2022). In interviews and survey comments, they highlighted multiple factors including coaching labs, peer networking and collaboration, and research-based learning experiences.

Every part of MLDS, the mentorship, coaching labs, meetings and peer collaboration have all been INVALUABLE!

-Principal

A big thing that I haven't bragged on is the networking piece. The research-based strategies are also huge as well as the coaching labs. Every component of MLDS is important and an integral part of the professional learning we receive.

-Principal

Also, principals and superintendents were highly positive about the support from MLDS specialists and mentors. As Figures 20 shows, principals (92–97%) believed their MLDS specialists understand schools like theirs, help them to apply MLDS learnings to real-life situations, and effectively support them; most superintendents (88–93%) concurred.

The specialists are phenomenal. They gave us so many opportunities to practice new strategies with our peers. They are knowledgeable and experienced.

-Principal

MLDS specialists have received numerous compliments from our administrators. Their professionalism and expertise are outstanding.

-Superintendent

In addition, principals (91–94%) and superintendents (87–91%) highly valued the mentoring component of the program (see Figure 21). They believed the support from mentors contributes to principal leadership and retention in the program.

I have had such a wonderful experience with my mentor and wholeheartedly believe my mentor is the reason my first year as a principal has been successful.

-Principal

I plan to continue participating in MLDS, and one reason why is because my mentor has been so supportive and stayed in contact with me.

-Principal

The mentors are extremely effective because they reference what we do here. There is a camaraderie about all the principals' work. The program is top-notch.

-Superintendent

Principals emphasized the importance of receiving support from their superintendents for their participation and engagement in MLDS.

My district is very supportive of MLDS. I have no issues if I have to leave my building for MLDS trainings because I know the district supports this work. Not all districts are like that. I am proud to be a part of MLDS.

-Principal

The knowledge that I am supported when I'm out of the building brings a lot of comfort and lowers guilt from being away from the building. This allows me to focus and be fully present.

-Principal

RQ1–G: Emerging Issues

Specialists noted **there is an emerging urgency for MLDS to update existing training materials and provide new learning content to meet the needs of today's school leaders**.

We need to see the urgency of updating our treatments and resources. They need to be culturally relevant.

-Specialist

Treatments need to be updated. They are 7+ years old. They are a solid foundation; however, they need to be updated with contemporary research-based work.

-Specialist

The system needs to include updated treatments, more relevant to today's leaders. Acceleration, equity, pedagogy, PLC structures, and supporting mediocre teachers are some topics that need to be addressed.

-Specialist

Across the years, principals and superintendents highly valued the quality, usefulness, and relevance of MLDS training content and materials. Within this context, they concurred with the specialists and highlighted the value of having more current MLDS learning content.

MLDS should update some of the session content—it is too repetitive and a little outdated at times. Keep up with the current challenges principals are facing.

-Principal

Be sure the materials are fresh. After four years people may stop going and the materials may be redundant. If it is fresh and it continues to build your skills, then it continues to be beneficial as long as you are able to go.

-Principal

I do not want my principal to go back and get the same thing. If it is something new and he will gain additional skills, I will support him continuing.

-Superintendent

One specialist indicated developing new MLDS learnings is already work in progress.

We are working to address new areas of content/concern that Missouri principals are experiencing. There is work to be done in the areas of bias, equity, social emotional learning, and addressing learning loss.

-Specialist

Across the years, most principals believed MLDS provides them with customized support, which plays a key role in facilitating their professional growth. Within this context, **some principals believed MLDS should deepen the customization of support to principals.**

I would recommend splitting the cohorts into elementary and secondary. I have felt that at times the content is dominated by an elementary mindset or approach.

-Principal

As an assistant principal, there are things we talked about that I have no control over. Some topics were less applicable to me at this point, and there were very few topics that addressed the role of assistant principal specifically which I really could have used.

-Principal

I would like to see more specialized sessions or focus groups to support peripheral areas. For example: A focus group for special education administrators, a focus group for alternative education leaders, and/or a focus group for athletic directors.

-Principal

While many principals and superintendents found in-person meetings more effective, some interviewees valued the convenience of the virtual participation format. In this context, many interviewees continued to indicate it can be challenging for principals to be away from their buildings for in-person MLDS learning activities.

I do wish the MLDS programs had a virtual option for all meetings, or at least an option to listen in on the great conversations.

-Principal

When they do the online platform, it is seamless and they still benefit. We're in a large geographic area, so having the virtual platform has been a good thing.

-Superintendent

In January and February, we meet virtually because of the weather. Some lessons are more adaptable virtually. For the mentors, they can talk online which is better than on the phone or texting. It made it easier to communicate and build relationships.

-Specialist

Some principals and superintendents noted there should be stronger collaboration between MLDS and districts. By strengthening the connections, superintendents will be better prepared to support the professional growth of principals and engage their MLDS-trained principals as a resource when making districtwide policies.

I believe that district leadership should have more communication with the MLDS leadership. I do not know what the goals are or what my administrators are learning.

-Superintendent

It would be helpful to get some sort of communique from MLDS regional persons about the topics and activities that are being discussed.

-Superintendent

MLDS should collaborate with our district to provide opportunities for us to lead. It would have been nice if I had opportunities to show current administrators in my district what I am learning through MLDS.

-Principal

MLDS can continue to communicate with superintendents about the benefits of the trainings in order to continue to have superintendent support.

-Principal

A few superintendents indicated MLDS should ensure the involvement of district leaders in pairing principals with mentors. They also believed there should be a stronger connection between superintendents and mentors.

> *Work needs to be done on the mentoring aspect of the program. I wanted to be part of the decision about the mentor my principal was assigned. Without any input from me, a high school principal was assigned as the mentor to my middle school principal. That is not a good match, and I don't think my principal is benefiting.*
>
> -Superintendent

> *Mentors need to be onsite more, meet with us as a team, and share what has been worked on and what principals are learning. It is important for all of us to reflect.*
>
> -Superintendent

Some principals and superintendents expressed a strong desire that MLDS specialists conduct more on-site visits and provide school-specific support to principals.

> *I would love an annual one-on-one onsite with our MLDS representative for specific school support.*
>
> -Principal

> *I would like the team leaders to possibly make two school visits a year to give MLDS participants more specialized support for their school's needs.*
>
> -Principal

> *My principals are well supported. The only thing would be some check-ins and follow-ups. The site visits are beneficial and could have more in-person.*
>
> -Superintendent

RQ2: Leadership Challenges and MLDS Support

Many principals believed MLDS learnings are effectively equipping them to address existing educational issues and respond to emerging leadership challenges in productive ways.

> *MLDS re-centers us to keep the focus on instruction. They encourage us to keep going forward and to improve the school.*
>
> -Principal

> *Every day is a challenge to some degree or another, and MLDS provides me with a toolbox that I can utilize regularly. Moreover, it gives me a network of people to ask when I feel like I don't have the tool in the box.*
>
> -Principal

There are different leadership challenges that pop up each day! MLDS helps me to adapt and make decisions on the fly.

-Principal

Within this context, some principals identified a number of specific challenges they find themselves in. **One leadership challenge is related to dealing with student discipline issues.**

Student discipline has been a challenge this year. Knowing when to do certain types of investigations (e.g., bullying), strategies for documenting investigations and conversations with students/parents, and appropriate consequences for the different levels of discipline have all been challenging to navigate.

-Principal

I need more training on discipline and dealing with parents, teachers, and students.

-Principal

Other principals indicated **it is challenging to have tough conversations with staff, students, or parents.**

The biggest leadership challenge for me is managing the staff and dealing with hard conversations. Also, addressing those difficult things without totally hurting the morale of the school. I do not feel that we did much, if any, of that with MLDS.

-Principal

I would appreciate more focus on how to have hard conversations and discussions with staff, students, and parents.

-Principal

Time management is highlighted as another leadership challenge.

Time management is a big challenge. MLDS has provided treatments on this, but it always seems to be a struggle.

-Principal

I have struggled this year with time management. MLDS has helped me to prioritize tasks using the prioritization framework.

-Principal

A couple of principals noted **it is difficult to recruit and retain teachers.**

One challenge is finding qualified teachers. We have only 1 or 2 candidates for positions. I had to dismiss a teacher in the middle of the year but I hesitated because I knew about the paucity of applicants. This situation happens more and more often.

-Principal

Recent educational trends regarding teacher shortages are an issue. The challenge is recruiting and retaining staff. Every vacancy that comes up is hard to fill.

-Principal

Also, **some principals found it challenging to address the emotional wellbeing needs of teachers and students and build a positive school culture.**

The social emotional side with both teachers and students. Student and teacher relationships are strained and we need to focus more on improving these relationships for next year. MLDS learnings aren't really equipping me at all in this area.

-Principal

I find myself facing a leadership challenge of continuing to shift the building's culture towards a culture that is all-around better for students and not so punitive.

-Principal

Some principals also indicated they struggle with providing effective instructional support.

I find myself in leadership challenges dealing with the best way to coach staff in developing best practices and utilizing them with fidelity.

-Principal

I am currently struggling to get teachers to not use technology as a crutch. After COVID, effective teaching has decreased. The feedback strategies are helpful but I would like more information on increasing rigor without forcing teachers out.

-Principal

A few principals identified additional supports they need from MLDS. It included opportunities to learn from veteran principals and receive updates on state initiatives.

An area of support that the team could possibly provide would be a day of shadowing a veteran administrator to gain insight on how different schools run.

-Principal

I would like some brief updates during MLDS sessions regarding new initiatives being pushed out by the state.

-Principal

RQ3: Comparisons of Principals' Perceptions

Table 6 compares the responses of MLDS principals by whether they work at a school identified as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school under ESSA. As the table shows, **the perceptions of principals in CSI and Non-CSI schools about MLDS were similar and both were**

highly positive. As an example, all CSI and Non-CSI principals believed MLDS increases their ability to identify different levels of quality of classroom instruction.

As Table 7 shows, **the perceptions of principals in city, suburban, and rural areas were generally similar**. For example, principals in all three types of communities agreed MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices (100% for cities, 97% for suburbs, and 99% for rural areas). Within this context, the responses of principals in cities and suburbs were different on some survey prompts. As an example, higher percentages of principals in cities than in suburban areas agreed they receive support in applying their MLDS learnings from their district (93% vs. 79%) or from their RPDC (93% vs. 76%).

White principals and principals of other race/ethnicity were both highly positive about MLDS and the perceptions of white principals were generally more positive (see Table 8). As an example, both white principals (92%) and principals of other race/ethnicity (89%) strongly agreed/agreed they are regularly using what they learn from MLDS at their school. The percentage of principals who strongly agreed with this survey prompt, however, is notably higher for white principals (56%) than for principals of other race/ethnicity (18%).

Table 9 shows **there is a general trend that the longer principals participate in MLDS, the more positive their perceptions are.** As an example, the percentage of principals who believed MLDS provides customized support to address their specific needs increased from 83% for one year of participation, to 88% for two years and three years, and to 94% for four or more years.

RQ4: Teacher Leaders' Perceptions

The teacher leader interviews explored the perceived impact of teacher leaders of their principals' participation in MLDS on classroom instruction and student learning. Thirteen teacher leaders from 13 LEAs participated in the interviews.

Teacher leaders were highly positive about the quality, usefulness, and relevance of the professional development provided by their principals. They indicated the learning opportunities focus on research, are differentiated, and meet individual needs.

> *Our principal has been doing a great job of providing professional development that is useful and can be applied in the moment.*
>
> -Teacher Leader

> *My principal keeps us current on new research about instruction and behavior. She brings it back from her training to the school.*
>
> -Teacher Leader

> *We get a lot of differentiation especially for grade level. What we do in the 5th grade is not the same as kindergarten. I think it meets all our needs very well.*
>
> -Teacher Leader

Also, **teacher leaders indicated their principals promote reflection on instruction and provide constructive feedback.**

> *Our principal ensures instructional feedback is more useful. He has empowered lead teachers to support other teachers' reflection.*
>
> -Teacher Leader

> *My principal tells me what I do great and what needs to improve. It is constructive criticism. It's what I can do to get better. It is valued feedback.*
>
> -Teacher Leader

Teacher leaders believed their MLDS-trained principals build positive relationships, promote two-way communication, and encourage teachers to take on leadership roles.

> *Our principal cultivates student relationships to the moon and back. He really makes us think about the individuality of each student.*
>
> -Teacher Leader

> *We are constantly talking to families and keep them in the loop. We work closely with families, and we talk about two-way communication to keep families involved.*
>
> -Teacher Leader

> *Our principal is infectious in encouraging teachers to take on leadership roles. We have a lot of new teachers who want to be involved and she gives them opportunities.*
>
> -Teacher Leader

Teacher leaders believed their principals' leadership practices contribute to improvement in instruction, student achievement, and teacher retention.

> *A huge change we have seen is we have more small-group teaching which has helped our test scores due to one-on-one help. Everything is improving.*
>
> -Teacher Leader

> *We are making students capable learners and helping them set goals to see what is relevant about their learning. In the last four years our scores are increasing.*
>
> -Teacher Leader

> *This year, I noticed in this building there is zero turnover. We retain because the principal fosters a family feeling. We value teachers and want them to stay.*
>
> -Teacher Leader

Responses of teacher leaders were highly consistent with the teacher survey findings in Liang & Slotnik (2021, 2022). These responses suggested that **by proactively disseminating their MLDS learnings, principals are supporting teachers to improve classroom instruction, which in turn, translates into greater student learning gains within their schools.**

Implications and Recommendations

Five years' survey and interview data consistently indicate MLDS is meeting its goal of developing and supporting school leaders. Within this context, the following issues and recommendations are intended to help DESE further strengthen the program by making evidence-based refinements.

Issue One: MLDS Learnings

Overview

Principals and superintendents indicated school leaders apply MLDS training content and materials at their school. They also agreed the support from MLDS is customized. They found face-to-face networking and collaboration impactful.

Recommended Action

Update existing training materials and provide new learning content. Principals and superintendents highly valued the quality, usefulness, and relevance of MLDS content and learning materials. Within this context, some expressed a desire for MLDS to provide more updated training materials, including the most recent research. MLDS should engage the specialist team to review existing training documents, identify changes needed, and begin to update the learning materials.

Also, new leadership challenges emerged during the pandemic (e.g., emotional wellbeing needs of students and teachers, academic acceleration, teacher recruitment, development and retention, equity). Principals and superintendents are looking forward to MLDS support in helping today's school leaders to address those emerging issues.

Deepen the customization of MLDS support to principals. MLDS is most impactful when the support is customized to local contexts and individual needs. Over the years, principals and superintendents agreed the program provides customized support to principals. Within this context, some principals continued to highlight the need for more differentiated support. Therefore, MLDS should consider creating more cohesive and targeted training groups based on principal characteristics (e.g., instructional experience, position) or school contexts (e.g., school level). This approach could be field-tested in select regions.

In addition, MLDS should provide topic-specific learning sessions for those principals needing it. These ad hoc trainings might focus on the specific leadership challenges that principals identify (e.g., student discipline, how to have tough conversations, time management, teacher recruitment and retention). MLDS should also examine how to effectively provide individual-specific support to principals (e.g., opportunities to shadow experienced administrators).

Issue Two: MLDS, Superintendents, and Mentors

Overview

Superintendents and mentors play a pivotal role in the success of MLDS. By further strengthening the connections among MLDS, superintendents, and mentors, the program can be more effective in supporting and developing school leaders.

Recommended Action

Intensify collaborations between MLDS and district leaders. Principals are more engaged in MLDS learnings when they are supported by their superintendents. To build a larger pool of supportive district leaders, some principals and superintendents underscore the value of actively developing collaborations between MLDS and districts. By strengthening these collaborations, both MLDS and superintendents will be better positioned to provide more coordinated support. MLDS should therefore (a) provide superintendents with regular post-session briefs, focusing on the specific learnings of their own principals; (b) solicit input from superintendents to ensure they are onboard with the mentors identified for their principals; and (c) encourage superintendents to engage their MLDS-trained principals as a resource in district policymaking.

Strengthen the connections between superintendents and mentors. Principals and superintendents believed effective support from mentors is a key factor contributing to the effectiveness of the program. Within this context, some superintendents indicated there needs to be more collaboration between district leaders and mentors. Therefore, MLDS should encourage and support superintendents and mentors to improve these connections (e.g., through regular check-ins, district visits). Superintendents and mentors can examine together (a) the specific support mentors are providing to principals; (b) issues emerging within the district; and (c) ways the district and the mentor can align their support in developing principals as impactful school leaders.

Issue Three: Support from Specialists

Overview

Both principals and superintendents highly valued the support from MLDS specialists. They hoped specialists can provide more school-specific assistance.

Recommended Action

Conduct more on-site visits and provide school-specific support. Principals and superintendents believed MLDS specialists effectively facilitate the professional growth of principals. They expressed a strong desire for more one-on-one learning opportunities for principals with the specialists. MLDS should convene the specialist team to (a) review the plan (e.g., process, frequency) for specialists to conduct on-site visits; (b) set common understanding of the expectations for on-site visits; (c) develop protocols for specialists to use during their on-site visits; and (d) establish a feedback mechanism to continuously improve this practice.

Summary

Principals and superintendents believed MLDS effectively supports and develops school leaders before, during, and in the aftermath of the pandemic. Teacher leaders also indicated their principals' participation in the program contributes to improvements in teaching and learning. Keeping the focus on classroom instruction and student learning, MLDS is well-positioned to prepare school leaders across the state to address new leadership challenges as they emerge.

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Appendix A: MLDS Organizational Chart

The MLDS Commission

State Educational Agency | Education Administration Programs
Professional Associations | Regional Service Centers
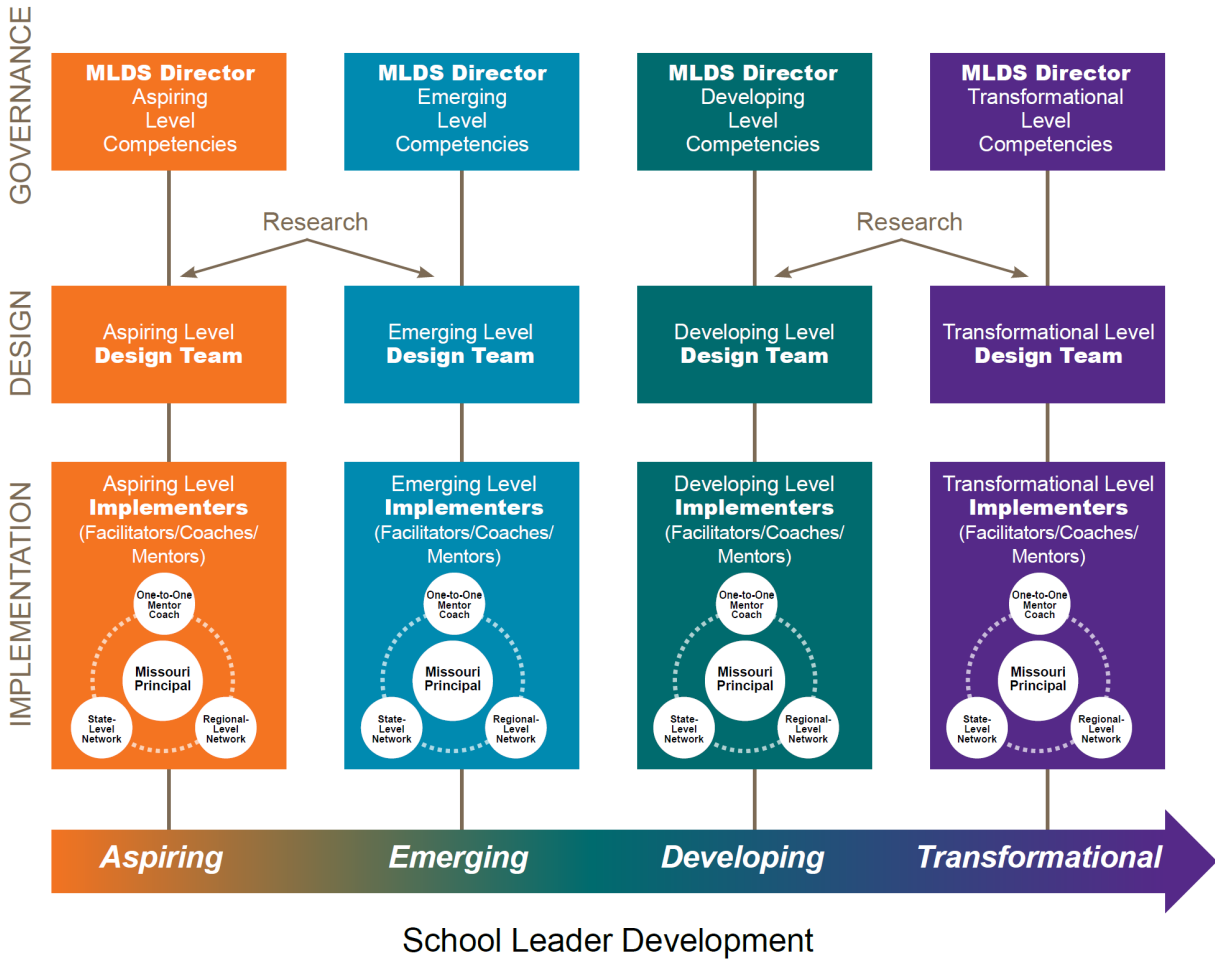
Source: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2019).

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

MLDS facilitates the professional growth of 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 (Year 1 or 2 MLDS content). 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 (Year 3 or 4 MLDS content). 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 (Year 5+ MLDS content). 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, 2016).

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

2016

July — Engagement Platform **Regional Meeting** — LE1 LE2 LE3 LE6

Aug. — Engagement Platform **Online Event** / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting — LE1 LE2 LE3 LE6

Sept. — Engagement Platform **Learning Lab** — LE2

Oct. — Engagement Platform **Mentor/Coach** / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting — LE1 LE2 LE3 LE6
Connect/Extend Learning Lab — LE2

Nov. — Engagement Platform **Regional Meeting** — LE4 LE6

2017

Dec. — Engagement Platform **Mentor/Coach** / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting — LE1 LE2 LE3 LE6

Feb. — Engagement Platform **Regional Meeting** — LE2 LE3 LE4 LE5 LE6

Mar. — Engagement Platform **Learning Lab** — LE2
Engagement Platform **Online Event** / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting — LE2 LE3 LE4 LE5 LE6

May — Engagement Platform **Mentor/Coach** / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting — LE2 LE3 LE4 LE5 LE6
Connect/Extend Learning Lab — LE2

July — Engagement Platform **Regional Meeting** — LE5 LE6

Aug. — Engagement Platform **Learning Lab** / Connect/Extend Learning Lab — LE2

Sept. — Engagement Platform **Learning Lab** / Connect/Extend Learning Lab — LE2

Oct. — Engagement Platform **Mentor/Coach** / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting — LE5 LE6
Connect/Extend Learning Lab — LE2

Nov.

Dec. — Engagement Platform **Mentor/Coach** / Connect/Extend Learning Lab — LE2

Jan.

2018

Feb. — Engagement Platform **Regional Meeting** — LE2 LE3 LE5 LE6

Mar. — Engagement Platform **Online Event** / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting — LE2 LE3 LE4 LE5 LE6
Engagement Platform **Learning Lab** — LE2

April
May
June — Engagement Platform **Mentor/Coach** / Connect/Extend Regional Meeting — LE2 LE3 LE4 LE5 LE6

Appendix C: Data Sources, Sample, and Methods

Statewide Surveys of MLDS Principals, Superintendents, and Specialists

The 2023 MLDS principal, superintendent, and specialist surveys were launched on May 1, 2023, using an independent platform. R12CC sent the survey links to DESE, and the RPDC specialists then forwarded the survey links to half of MLDS principals and half of superintendents that the specialists identified in their RPDC region. R12CC provided DESE with weekly updates on survey participation. The surveys were closed on May 26, 2023.

The MLDS principal survey included a series of Likert-scale questions for current MLDS participants. The questions focused on overall perceptions; fidelity of implementation; professional development; benefits and value; impact of the program; experience in 2022–23; and support from MLDS specialists and mentors. Eight open-ended questions further explored the perceptions of MLDS participants about leadership challenges and MLDS learnings; specific changes to their instructional leadership practices; accomplishments due to participation in MLDS; enhancing factors; impeding factors; additional supports needed; participation in MLDS; and other comments related to the program.

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 2022–23; and support from MLDS specialists and mentors. Five open-ended questions further explored the perceptions of superintendents about specific changes to their principal(s)' instructional leadership practices; their MLDS principal(s)' accomplishments due to participation in MLDS; 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.

Response Rates for the Surveys

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

Table 1. Response Rates for the MLDS Principal, Superintendent, and Specialist Surveys, 2022–23

Respondents	Population	Number of Responses	Response Rate
MLDS Principals	691	270	39%
Superintendents	203	70	34%
Specialists	27	27	100%

Note. "MLDS Principals" refers to current MLDS participants, who are primarily principals and assistant principals. The "Superintendents" group includes four Central Office Administrators (i.e., three assistant superintendents and one chief academic officer) who responded to the superintendent survey. In 2022–23, half of MLDS principals and half of superintendents in each RPDC region were identified by their specialists and invited to participate in the MLDS principal and superintendent surveys. Responses to survey questions were not required, therefore total numbers of respondents may vary throughout this report.

Characteristics of the Survey Respondents

As Table 2 shows, respondents to the principal survey were primarily at the Emerging (59%) and Developing (25%) levels. Half of them were principals (52%) and the other one-third assistant principals (37%). Coming from all nine RPDCs and the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled (MSSD), the respondents were primarily white (93%), non-CSI (57%) leaders in rural areas (64%). Most of them (86%) have been participating in MLDS for 1–3 years.

Table 2. Characteristics of Principal Survey Respondents, 2022–23

	Number	Percent
By MLDS Program Level		
Aspiring	16	6%
Emerging (Year 1 or 2 MLDS content)	159	59%
Developing (Year 3 or 4 MLDS content)	68	25%
Transformational (Year 5+ MLDS content)	27	10%
By Current Primary Position		
Principal	140	52%
Assistant Principal	101	37%
Other (e.g., director, teacher)	29	11%
By RPDC*		
Central	28	11%
Heart of Missouri	29	11%
Kansas City	15	6%
Northeast	30	11%
Northwest	15	6%
South Central	41	16%
Southeast	32	12%
Southwest	22	8%
St. Louis	51	19%
By Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0%
Black or African American	12	4%
Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity	1	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	0%
White	251	93%
Multi-Racial	2	1%
Prefer not to answer	2	1%
By CSI School Status		

	Number	Percent
Yes	20	7%
No	155	57%
I am not sure whether or not my school is a CSI school.	95	35%
By Community Type		
City	31	11%
Suburban	67	25%
Rural	172	64%
By Years Participating in MLDS		
1 year	122	45%
2 years	61	23%
3 years	49	18%
4 years	15	6%
5 years	11	4%
More than 5 years	12	4%

Note. N = 270. *Seven participants from the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled (MSSD) also took the survey.

Table 3 shows the superintendent survey respondents were primarily superintendents (94%).

Table 3. Characteristics of Superintendent Survey Respondents, 2022–23

	Number	Percent
By Current Primary Position		
Superintendent	66	94%
Central Administrator*	4	6%
By RPDC		
Central	10	14%
Heart of Missouri	4	6%
Kansas City	0	0%
Northeast	10	14%
Northwest	6	9%
South Central	11	16%
Southeast	15	21%
Southwest	13	19%
St. Louis	1	1%

Note. N = 70. *The "Central Administrator" group included three Assistant Superintendents and one Chief Academic Officer.

Table 4 shows most respondents (71%) have worked as an MLDS specialist for 1–3 years.

Table 4. Characteristics of Specialist Survey Respondents, 2022–23

Total Years As An MLDS Specialist	Number	Percent
1 year	5	19%
2 years	11	41%
3 years	3	11%
4 years	2	7%
5 years	2	7%
More than 5 years	4	15%

Note. N = 27. The survey question was, "How many years, in total, have you been an MLDS specialist? (If 2022–23 is your first year as an MLDS specialist, mark '1 year.')"

Table 5 shows the number of interviewees by role. R12CC developed four interview protocols for MLDS principals, superintendents, specialists, and teacher leaders, respectively. The questions were tailored as appropriate to the role of the interviewees.

Table 5. Number of Interviewees by Role, 2022–23 (N = 55)

Role	Number of Interviewees
MLDS Principals	20
Superintendents	17
Specialists	5
Teacher Leaders	13

The interview protocols for MLDS principals, superintendents, and specialists included questions on implementation fidelity, MLDS trainings, and 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 factors enhancing or impeding MLDS implementation, and recommendations for improvement.

The protocol for teacher leaders focused on questions including principals' professional development support and leadership practices, and the impacts of principals' participation in MLDS on classroom instruction, student learning, and the recruitment and retention of teachers.

Implementation Fidelity

To examine respondents' perceptions of the fidelity of MLDS implementation, this evaluation focused on *Participant Responsiveness* and *Program Differentiation* (e.g., Dane & Schneider, 1998, as cited in U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2015). These two dimensions of fidelity 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 2022–23
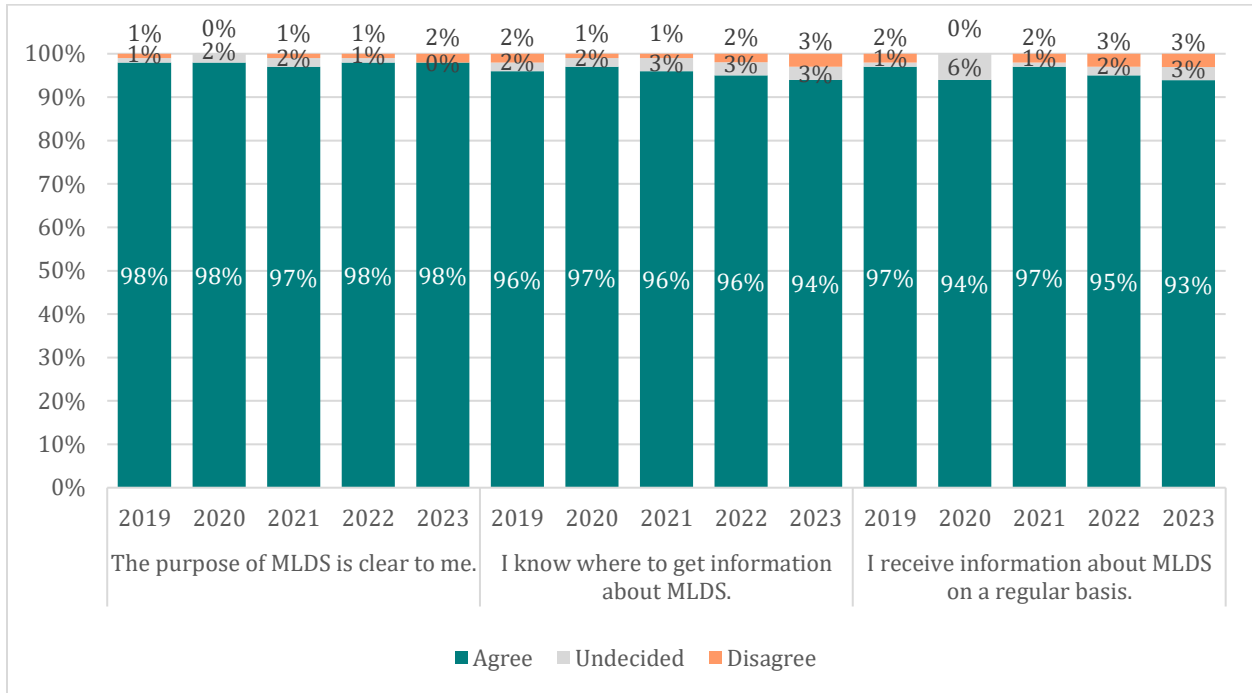
Note. Throughout this report, unless otherwise noted, agree is a composite of strongly agree/agree, and disagree is a composite of strongly disagree/disagree. Due to rounding, percentages may not always add up to precisely 100%. Survey prompts in the figures are those used in 2022–23. The 2022–23 survey questions are essentially the same as those in the 2018–19, 2019–20, 2020–21, and 2021-22 surveys with only minor modifications. Slotnik and Liang (2019) and Liang and Slotnik (2020, 2021, 2022) include the previous years' survey questions.

Figure 2. Overall Perceptions of Superintendents, 2018–19 to 2022–23

Figure 3. Principals' Overall Perceptions, 2018–19 to 2022–23

MLDS helps me to see the connection between developing my leadership skills and improving student learning at my school.

Year	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
2019	97%	2%	1%
2020	97%	3%	0%
2021	96%	3%	1%
2022	97%	1%	1%
2023	97%	3%	0%

I receive support from my district in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.

Year	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
2019	88%	7%	5%
2020	92%	6%	2%
2021	92%	5%	3%
2022	88%	7%	5%
2023	88%	9%	3%

I receive support from my RPDC in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.

Year	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
2019	93%	5%	2%
2020	91%	9%	0%
2021	91%	6%	3%
2022	88%	9%	3%
2023	87%	11%	2%

Legend: ■ Agree   ■ Undecided   ■ Disagree

Figure 4. Superintendents' Overall Perceptions, 2018–19 to 2022–23

MLDS helps my principal(s) to see the connection between developing their leadership skills and improving student learning at their school.

Year	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
2019	85%	12%	3%
2020	96%	2%	2%
2021	84%	13%	3%
2022	97%	3%	0%
2023	96%	3%	1%

My principal(s) receive support from my district in applying what they have learned from MLDS at their school.

Year	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
2019	91%	3%	6%
2020	90%	10%	0%
2021	95%	3%	2%
2022	95%	5%	0%
2023	97%	1%	1%

Discussions with my principal(s), relative to MLDS content, have influenced districtwide programs and practices.

Year	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
2019	66%	24%	10%
2020	78%	18%	4%
2021	75%	20%	5%
2022	86%	8%	7%
2023	76%	21%	3%

Legend: ■ Agree   ■ Undecided   ■ Disagree

Figure 5. Perceptions of Principals on Fidelity of MLDS Implementation, 2018–19 to 2022–23

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.

The MLDS methods (e.g., regional meetings, state conferences, learning labs, one-to-one mentoring and coaching) are helpful in developing my leadership skills.

I am regularly using what I learn from MLDS at my school.

■ Agree ■ Undecided ■ Disagree

Figure 6. Perceptions of Principals on MLDS Training Content and Materials, 2018–19 to 2022–23

MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices.

The professional development content is relevant to my needs as a school leader.

The training materials are relevant to me.

■ Agree ■ Undecided ■ Disagree
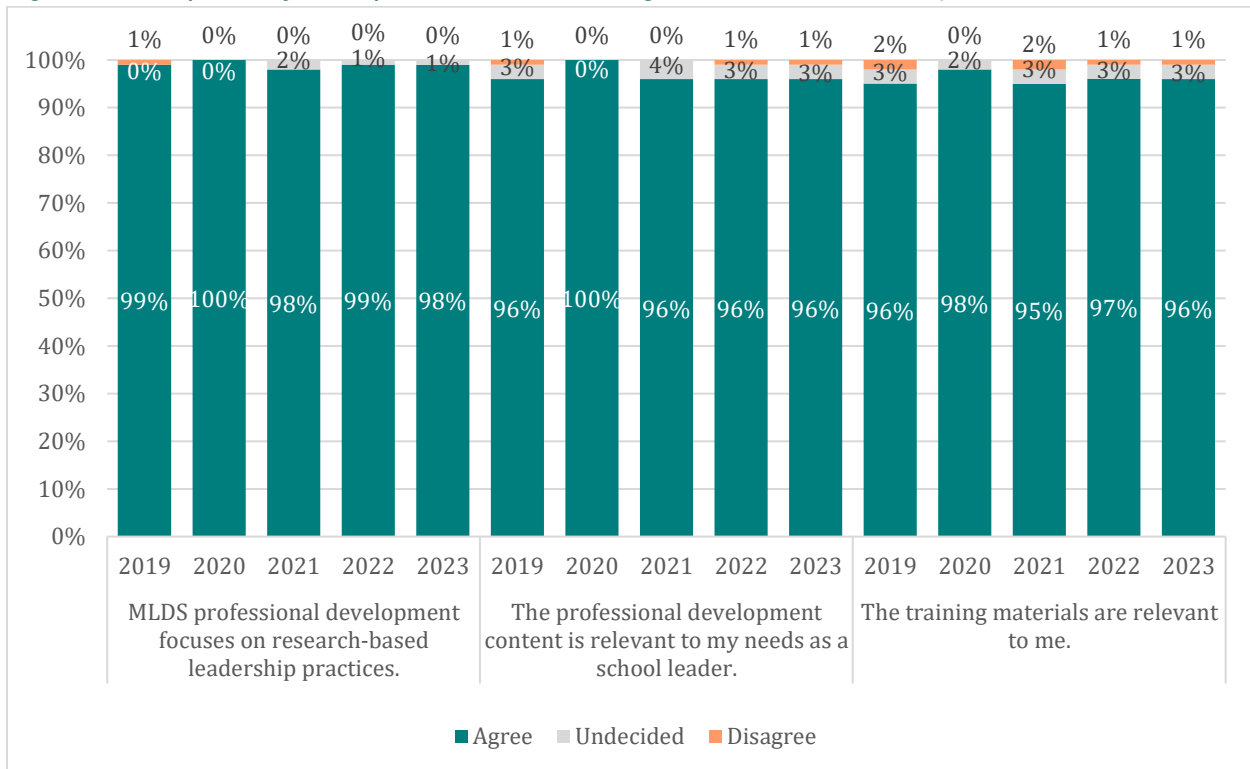
Figure 7. Perceptions of Principals on MLDS Professional Development, 2018–19 to 2022–23
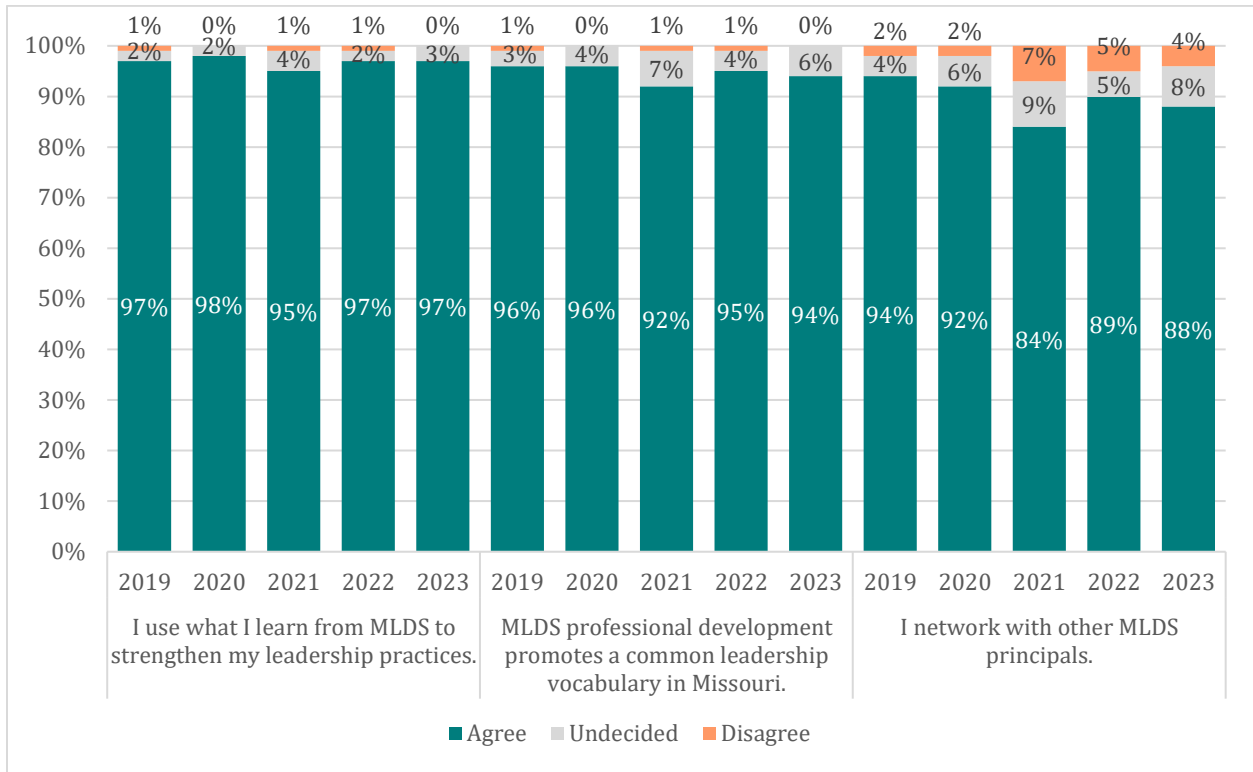
Figure 8. Perceptions of Principals on Benefits and Value of MLDS, 2018–19 to 2022–23
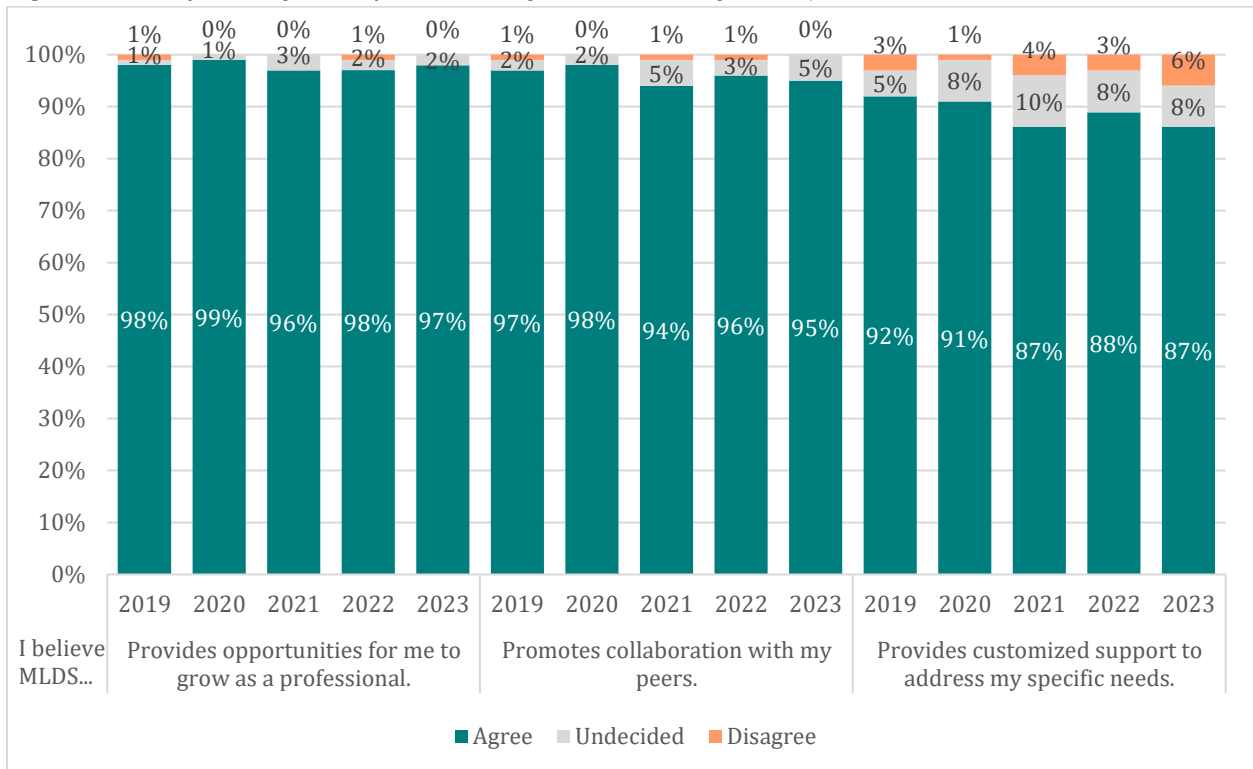
Figure 9. Perceptions of Superintendents on Benefits and Value of MLDS, 2018−19 to 2022−23

Participation in MLDS...

Provides opportunities for principals to grow as professionals.

Promotes collaboration among principals.

Provides customized support to address principals' specific needs.

■ Agree ■ Undecided ■ Disagree
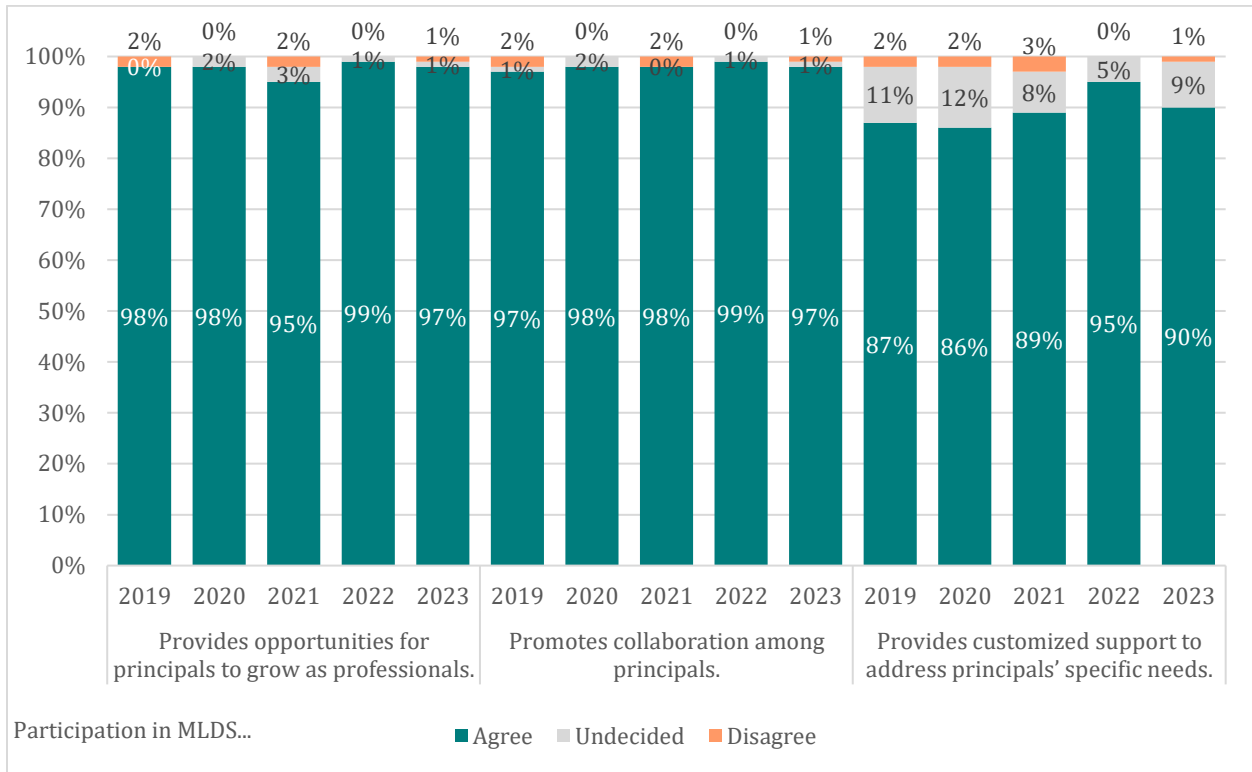
Figure 10. Principals' Perceptions on Benefits and Value of MLDS, 2018−19 to 2022−23

I believe MLDS strengthens my instructional leadership practices.

I believe MLDS makes me a better school leader.

■ Agree ■ Undecided ■ Disagree
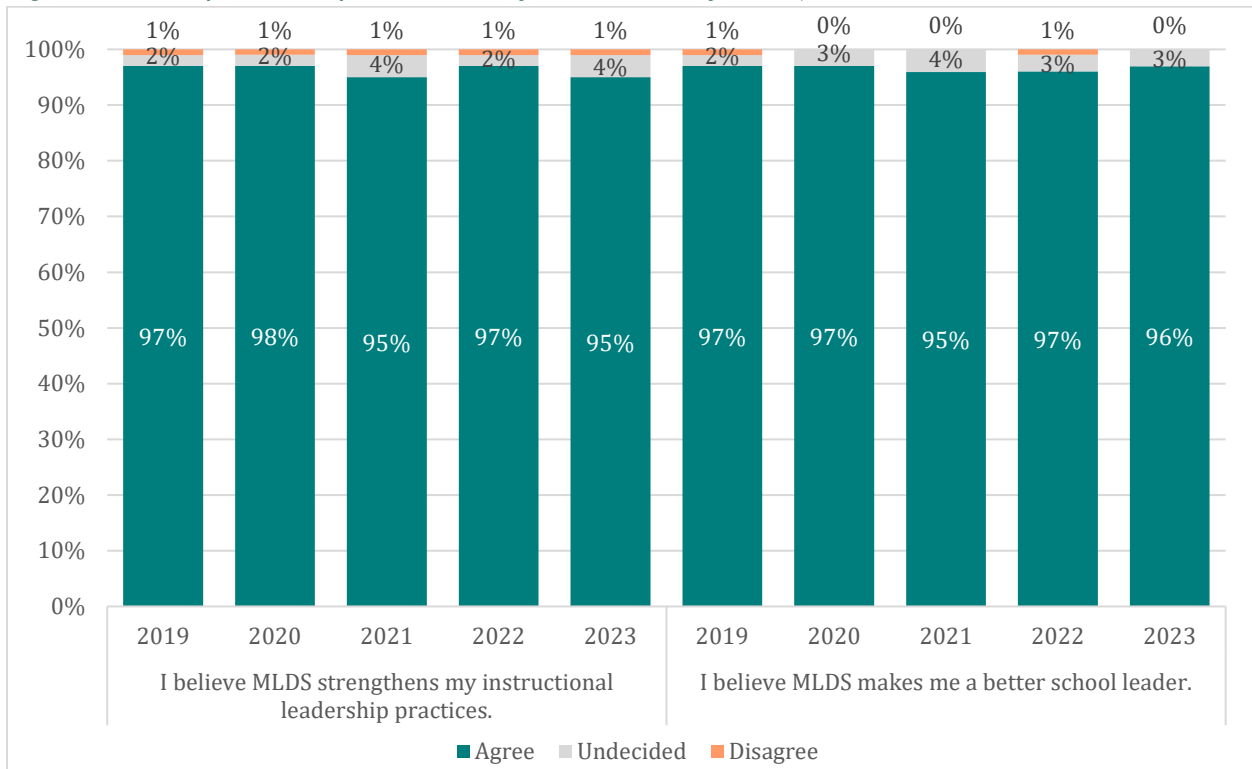
Figure 11. Superintendents' Perceptions on Benefits and Value of MLDS, 2018–19 to 2022–23
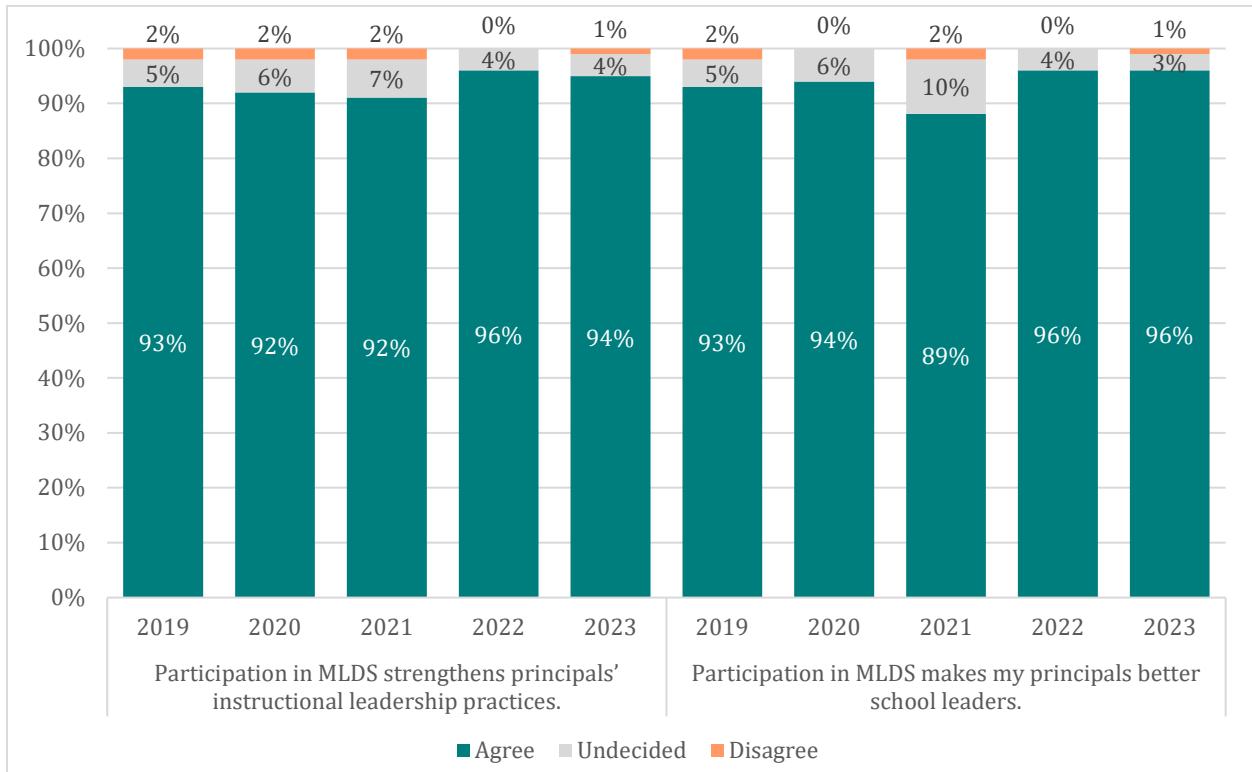
Figure 12. Perceptions of Principals on Impacts of MLDS on Instructional Leadership Practices, 2018–19 to 2022–23
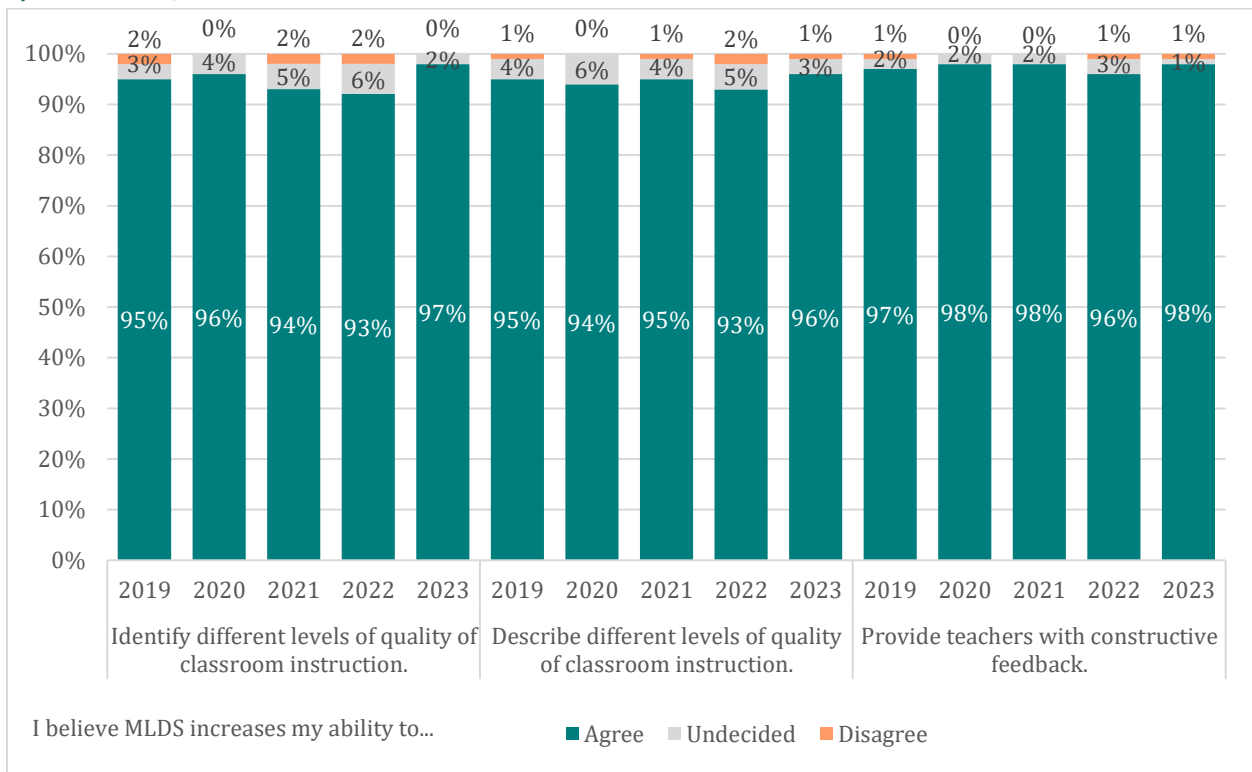
Figure 13. Perceptions of Superintendents on Impacts of MLDS on Instructional Leadership Practices, 2018–19 to 2022–23

I believe MLDS increases my principal(s)'s ability to...

■ Agree ■ Undecided ■ Disagree
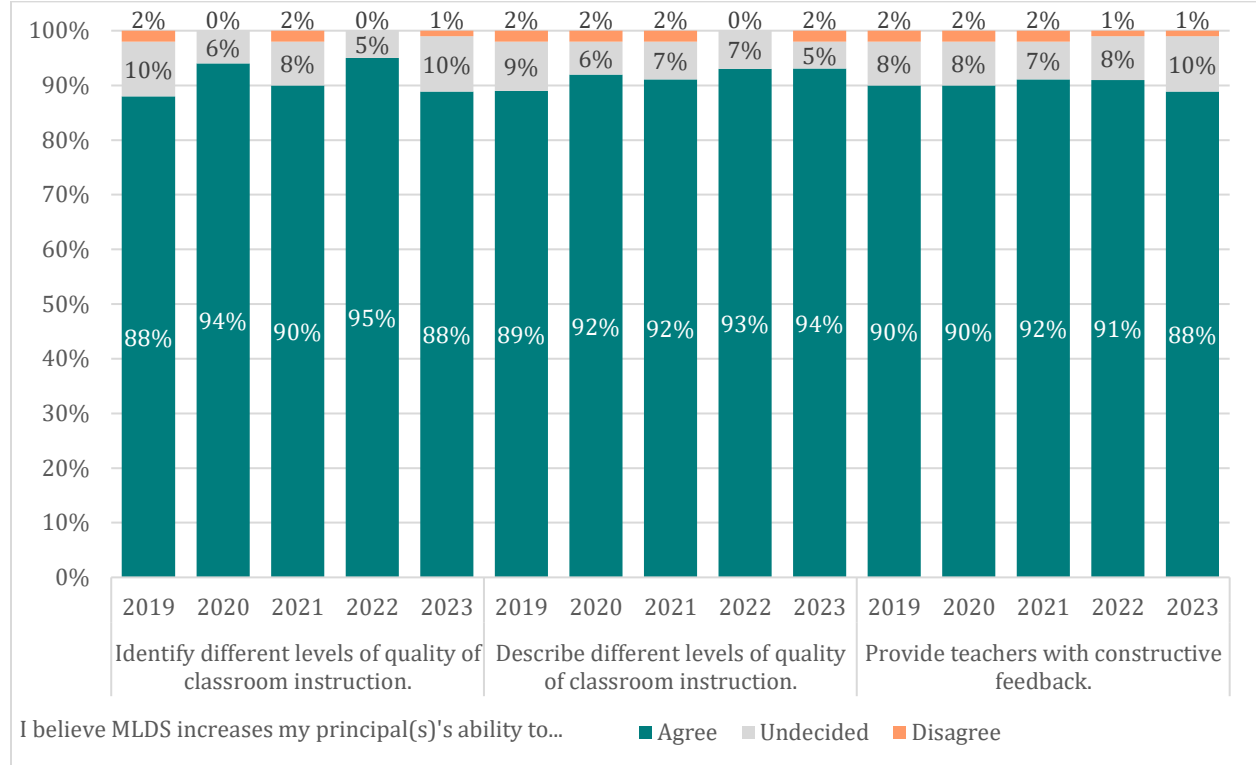
Figure 14. Perceptions of Principals and Superintendents on Impacts of MLDS on Classroom Instruction, 2018–19 to 2022–23

■ Agree ■ Undecided ■ Disagree
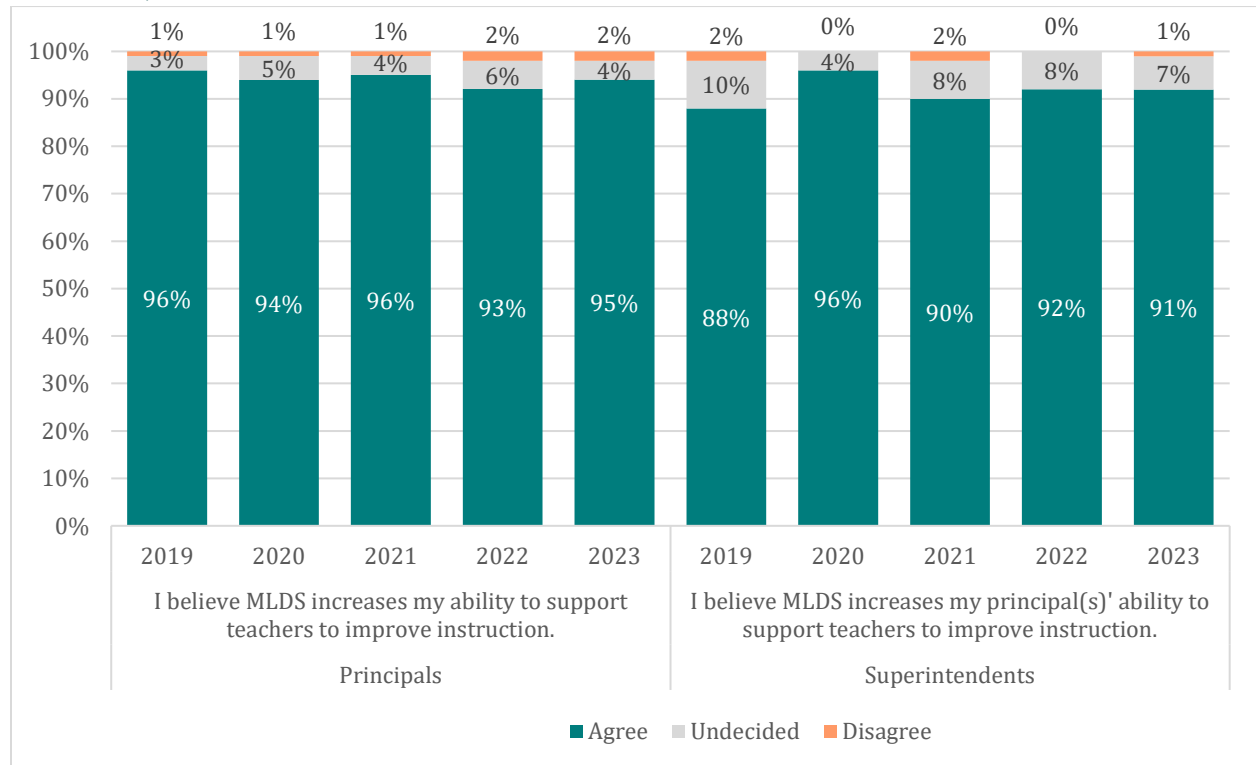
Figure 15. Perceptions of Principals and Superintendents on Impacts of MLDS on Instructional Leadership Practices and Classroom Instruction, 2021−22 and 2022-23
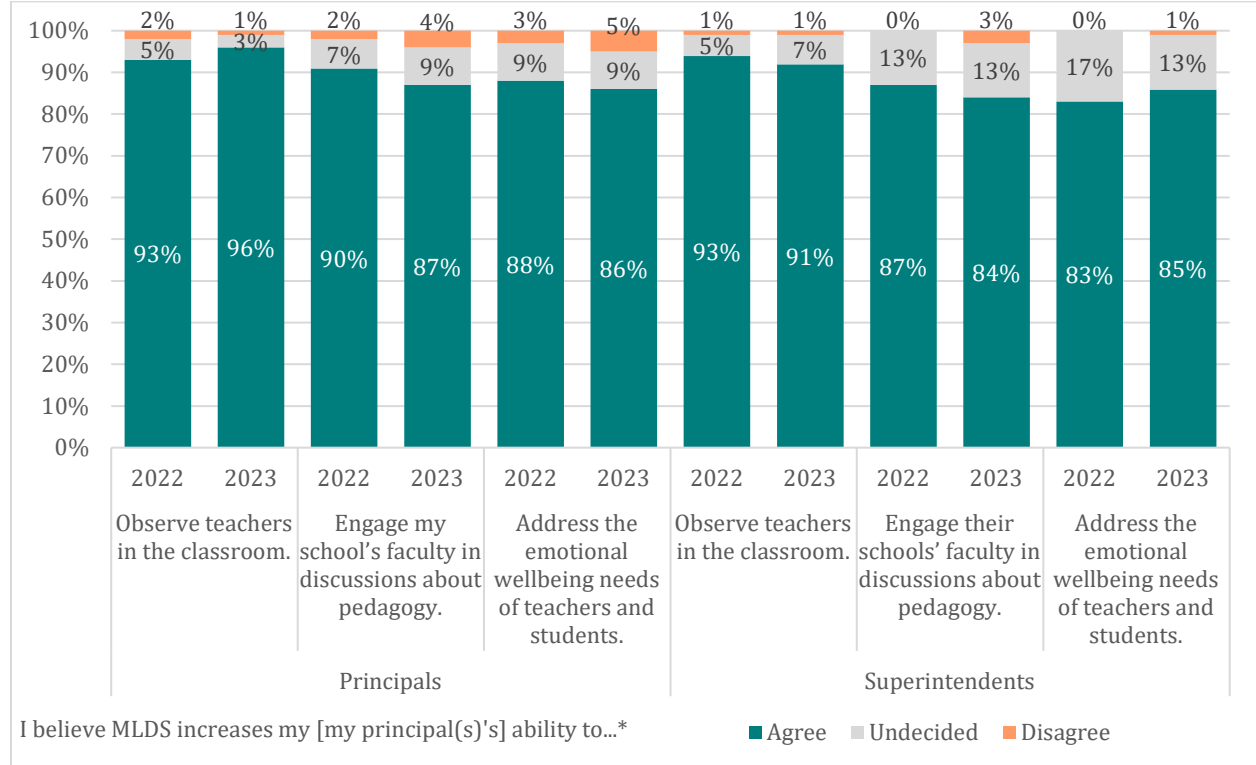
Note. *The text in brackets shows the different wording of the question for superintendents.

Figure 16. Perceptions of Principals on Impacts of MLDS on Student Achievement and School Leader Growth and Retention, 2018−19 to 2022−23
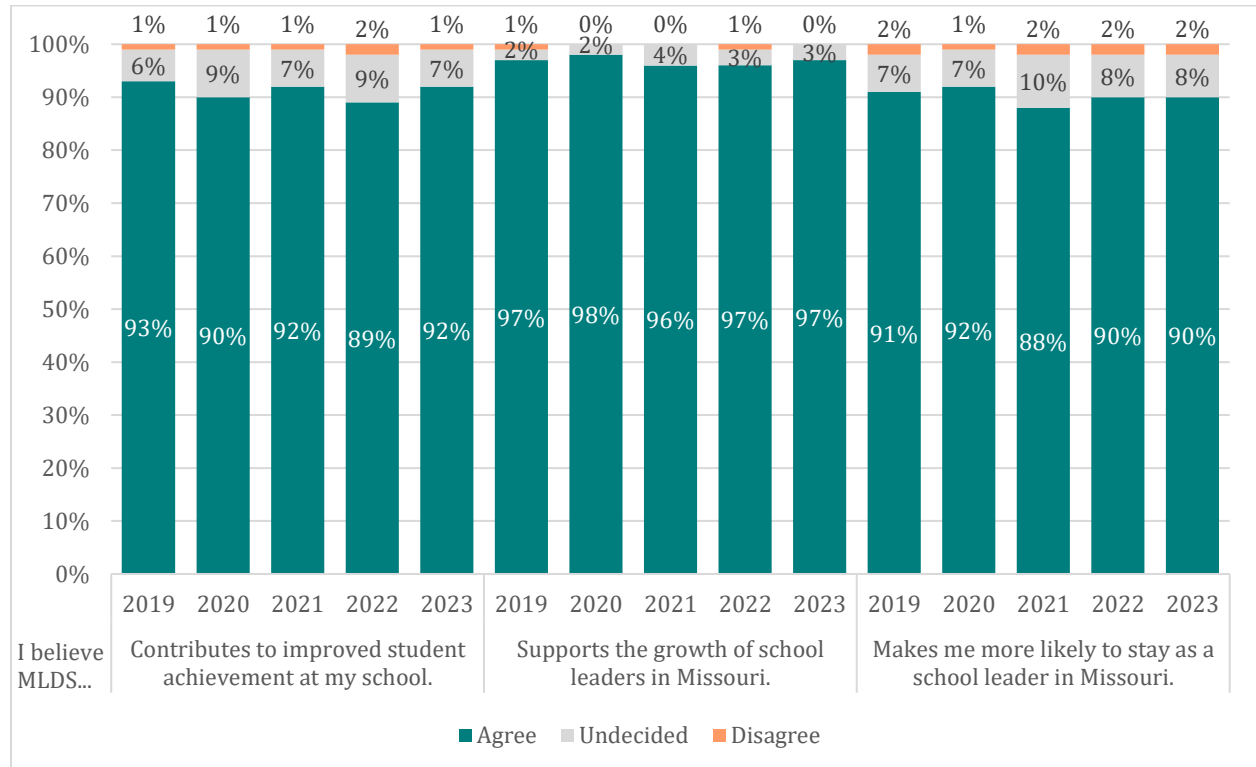
Figure 17. Perceptions of Superintendents on Impacts of MLDS on Student Achievement and School Leader Growth and Retention, 2018–19 to 2022–23
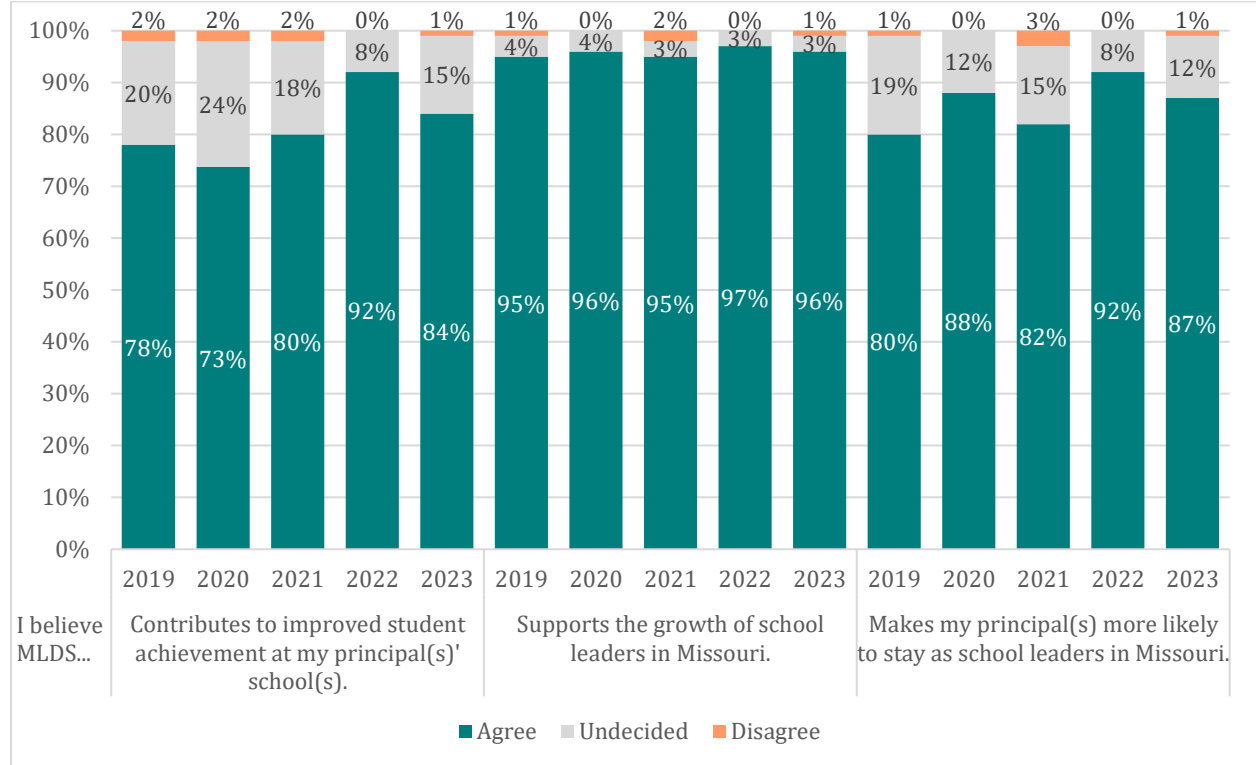
Figure 18. Perceptions of Principals on Support from MLDS, 2020–21 to 2022–23
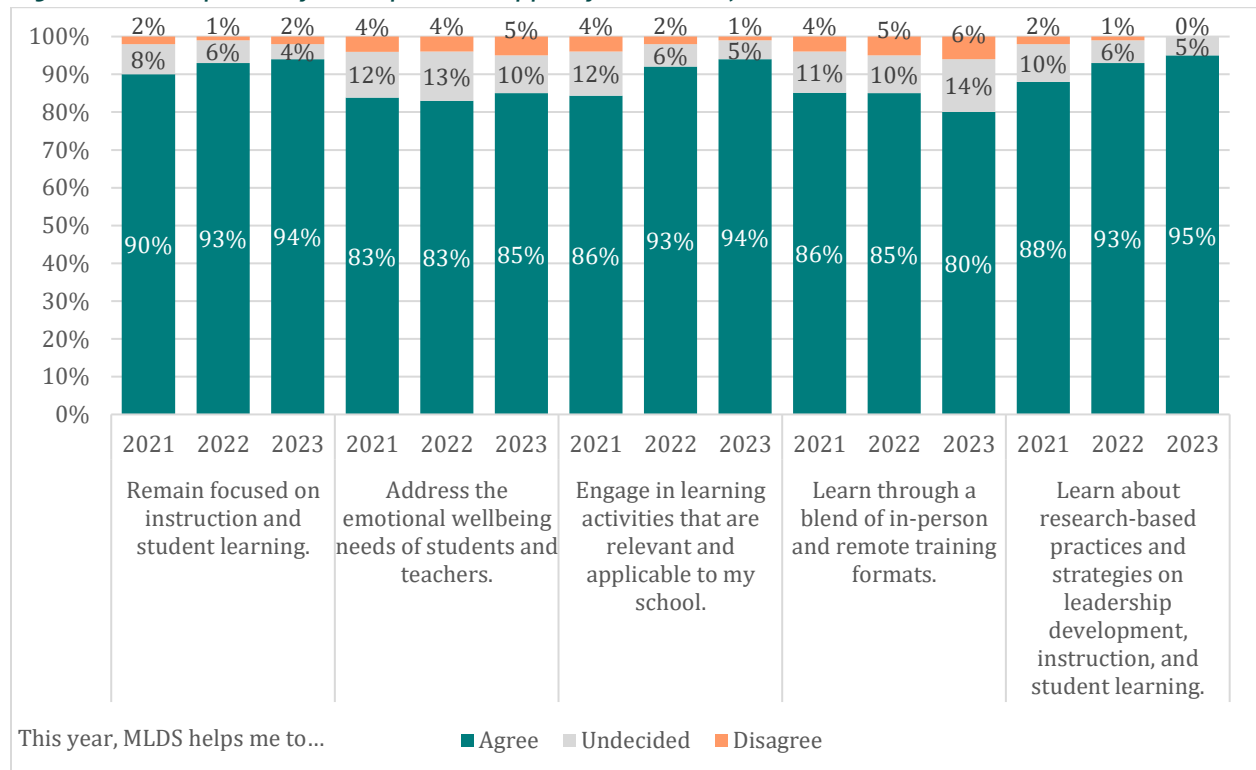
Figure 19. Perceptions of Superintendents on MLDS Support to Principals, 2020–21 to 2022–23

This year, MLDS helps my principal(s) to…

■ Agree   ■ Undecided   ■ Disagree
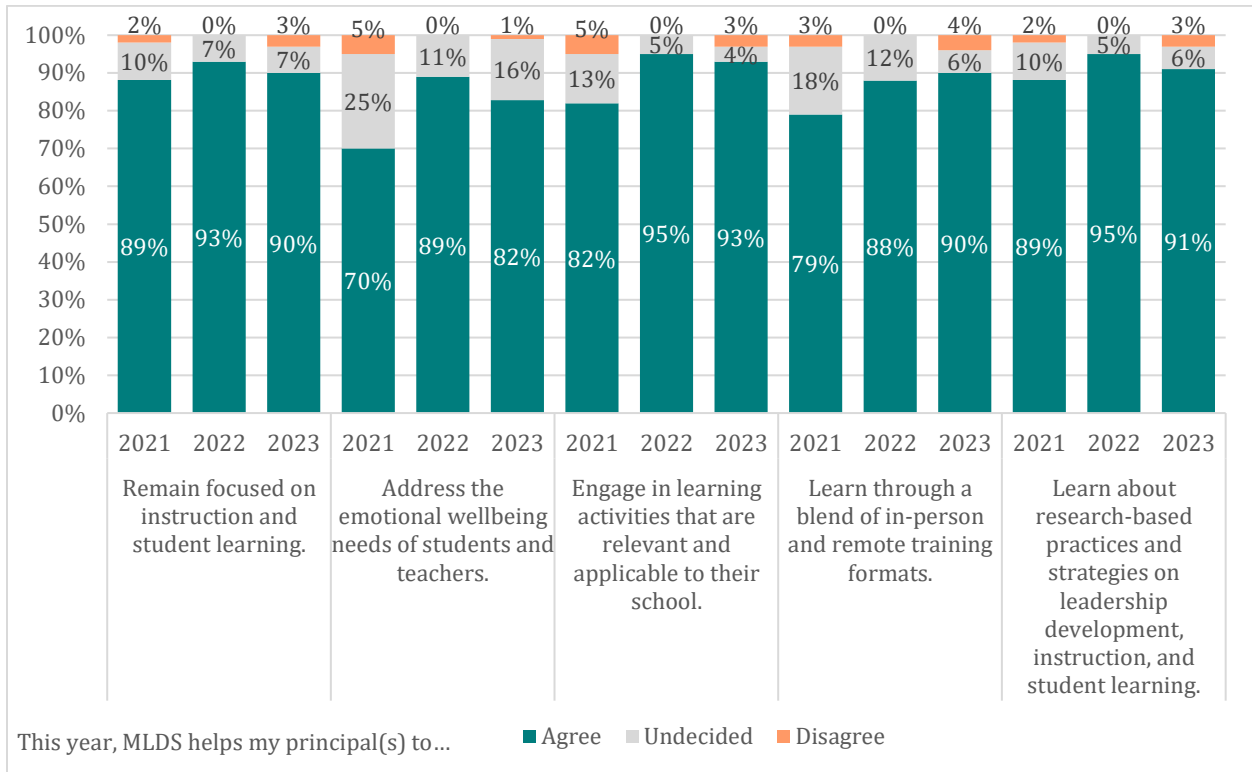
Figure 20. Perceptions of Principals and Superintendents on Support from MLDS Specialists, 2021–22 to 2022–23
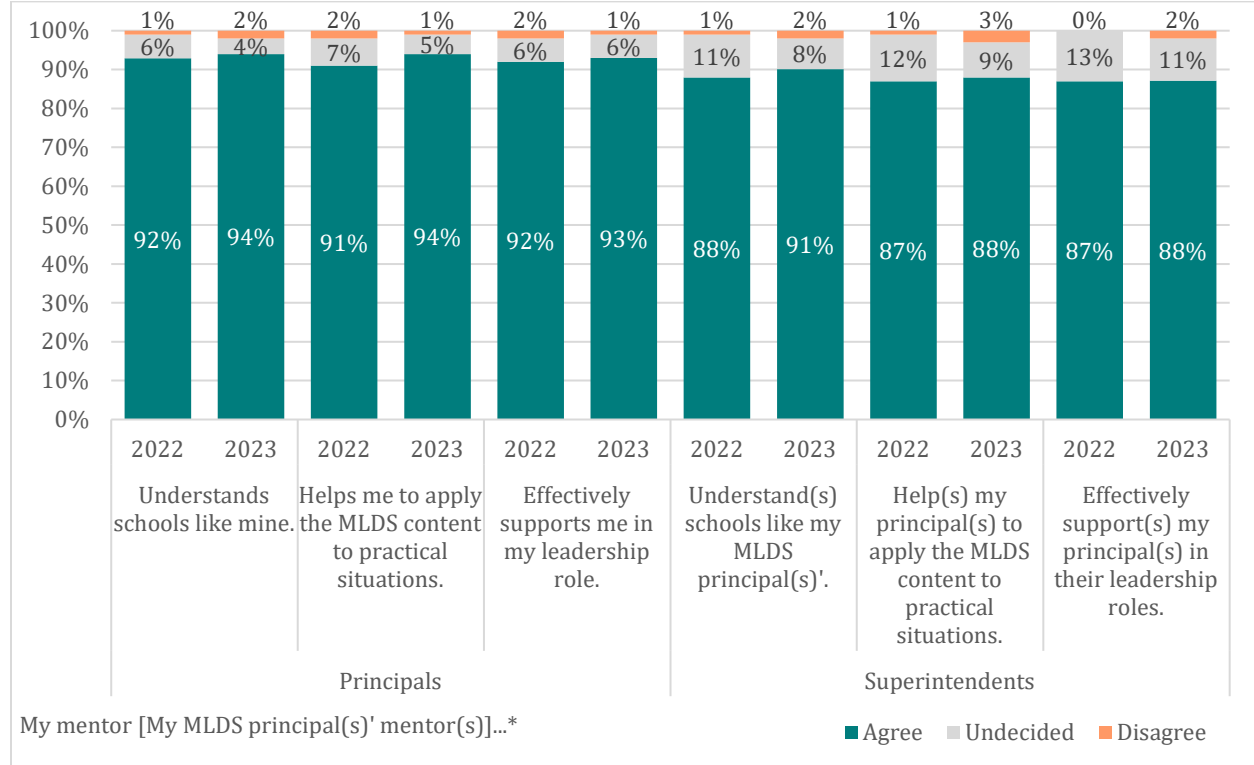
The MLDS specialists in my Regional Professional Development Center…

■ Agree   ■ Undecided   ■ Disagree

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

Table 6. Perceptions of Principals by School CSI Status, 2022–23

	CSI Principals				Non-CSI Principals			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Overall Perceptions								
The purpose of MLDS is clear to me.	17	82%	18%	0%	136	75%	24%	0%
I know where to get information about MLDS.	17	59%	41%	0%	136	63%	35%	1%
I receive information about MLDS on a regular basis.	17	59%	41%	0%	136	63%	32%	1%
I receive support from my district in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.	17	59%	29%	6%	136	57%	32%	10%
I receive support from my RPDC in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.	17	59%	41%	0%	136	57%	31%	10%
MLDS helps me to see the connection between developing my leadership skills and improving student learning at my school.	17	53%	47%	0%	136	68%	30%	1%
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.	17	65%	29%	6%	136	63%	32%	4%

	CSI Principals			Non-CSI Principals			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
The MLDS methods (e.g., regional meetings, state conferences, learning labs, one-to-one mentoring and coaching) are helpful in developing my leadership skills.	17	71%	29%	0%	136	68%	30%	1%
I am regularly using what I learn from MLDS at my school.	17	53%	35%	12%	134	56%	36%	6%
Professional Development								
MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices.	17	65%	35%	0%	136	73%	26%	1%
The professional development content is relevant to my needs as a school leader.	17	59%	35%	6%	136	67%	29%	2%
The training materials are relevant to me.	16	56%	38%	6%	136	63%	35%	1%
I use what I learn from MLDS to strengthen my leadership practices.	17	59%	41%	0%	135	66%	31%	2%
I network with other MLDS principals.	16	50%	31%	0%	136	62%	27%	7%
MLDS professional development promotes a common leadership vocabulary in Missouri.	17	65%	29%	6%	135	60%	33%	6%
Benefits and Value │ I believe MLDS…								
Provides opportunities for me to grow as a professional.	17	65%	35%	0%	136	69%	29%	1%
Promotes collaboration with my peers.	17	65%	29%	6%	135	73%	22%	4%
Provides customized support to address my specific needs.	17	53%	41%	6%	136	54%	32%	7%
Strengthens my instructional leadership practices.	17	65%	35%	0%	135	64%	33%	2%
Makes me a better school leader.	17	65%	35%	0%	134	66%	31%	1%
Impact │ I believe MLDS increases my ability to…								
Observe teachers in the classroom.	17	59%	35%	6%	136	63%	33%	2%
Identify different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	17	59%	41%	0%	136	57%	43%	0%
Describe different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	17	71%	29%	0%	136	58%	40%	1%
Provide teachers with constructive feedback.	17	71%	29%	0%	136	68%	31%	0%
Support teachers to improve instruction.	17	59%	41%	0%	135	58%	39%	1%
Address the emotional wellbeing needs of teachers and students.	17	53%	41%	6%	136	49%	40%	6%
Engage my school's faculty in discussions about pedagogy.	17	71%	24%	6%	136	49%	43%	7%
I believe MLDS…								

	CSI Principals			Non-CSI Principals			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Contributes to improved student achievement at my school.	17	47%	47%	6%	136	49%	46%	4%
Makes me more likely to stay as a school leader in Missouri.	17	47%	35%	18%	136	62%	29%	7%
Supports the growth of school leaders in Missouri.	17	65%	35%	0%	135	65%	33%	1%
This Year's Experience │ *This year, MLDS helps me to...*								
Remain focused on instruction and student learning.	17	47%	47%	6%	136	52%	43%	3%
Address the emotional wellbeing needs of students and teachers.	17	47%	41%	12%	136	46%	43%	5%
Engage in learning activities that are relevant and applicable to my school.	17	59%	35%	6%	136	55%	41%	3%
Learn through a blend of in-person and remote training formats.	17	53%	41%	6%	136	43%	37%	14%
Learn about research-based practices and strategies on leadership development, instruction, and student learning.	17	59%	35%	6%	136	63%	33%	4%
Support from MLDS Specialists and Mentors │ *The **MLDS specialists** in my Regional Professional Development Center...*								
Understand schools like mine.	17	53%	47%	0%	136	65%	28%	5%
Help me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	17	53%	47%	0%	136	68%	30%	1%
Effectively support me in my leadership role.	17	53%	47%	0%	136	68%	28%	3%
My mentor...								
Understands schools like mine.	13	77%	23%	0%	124	69%	25%	4%
Helps me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	13	77%	23%	0%	123	65%	29%	5%
Effectively supports me in my leadership role.	13	69%	31%	0%	124	65%	26%	8%

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. Responses of the CSI principals to all survey prompts are not statistically significantly different from those of the Non-CSI principals.

Table 7. Perceptions of Principals by Community Type, 2022–23

	City			Suburban			Rural		
	n	SA	A	n	SA	A	n	SA	A
Overall Perceptions									
The purpose of MLDS is clear to me.	28	68%	29%	57	72%	25%	153	73%	27%
I know where to get information about MLDS. **	28	68%	29%	57	44%	44%	153	60%	36%
I receive information about MLDS on a regular basis. **	28	68%	29%	57	46%	42%	153	65%	30%
I receive support from my district in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school. **	28	61%	32%	57	42%	37%	153	61%	30%
I receive support from my RPDC in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school. * **	28	61%	32%	57	37%	39%	153	59%	32%
MLDS helps me to see the connection between developing my leadership skills and improving student learning at my school.	28	64%	36%	57	53%	44%	153	69%	28%
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. **	28	68%	25%	57	42%	47%	154	68%	28%
The MLDS methods (e.g., regional meetings, state conferences, learning labs, one-to-one mentoring and coaching) are helpful in developing my leadership skills.	28	68%	32%	57	54%	37%	154	66%	31%
I am regularly using what I learn from MLDS at my school.	28	57%	36%	56	45%	43%	153	54%	37%
Professional Development									
MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices.	28	71%	29%	57	65%	32%	154	71%	28%
The professional development content is relevant to my needs as a school leader.	28	61%	36%	57	58%	35%	154	66%	31%
The training materials are relevant to me.	28	61%	36%	56	57%	36%	154	62%	35%
I use what I learn from MLDS to strengthen my leadership practices.	28	64%	36%	57	54%	40%	153	63%	33%
I network with other MLDS principals. **	28	64%	18%	56	46%	32%	154	62%	30%
MLDS professional development promotes a common leadership vocabulary in Missouri.	28	68%	29%	57	49%	42%	153	63%	31%
Benefits and Value │ *I believe MLDS…*									
Provides opportunities for me to grow as a professional.	28	68%	32%	57	54%	42%	154	71%	26%

	City			Suburban			Rural		
	n	SA	A	n	SA	A	n	SA	A
Promotes collaboration with my peers.	28	71%	21%	57	61%	32%	153	76%	20%
Provides customized support to address my specific needs.	28	57%	32%	57	42%	32%	154	52%	39%
Strengthens my instructional leadership practices.	28	71%	29%	57	51%	46%	153	61%	33%
Makes me a better school leader.	27	67%	33%	57	54%	40%	153	67%	29%
Impact │ *I believe MLDS increases my ability to…*									
Observe teachers in the classroom.	28	57%	39%	57	51%	46%	154	62%	33%
Identify different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	28	57%	43%	57	47%	49%	153	56%	41%
Describe different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	28	57%	43%	57	49%	44%	154	57%	39%
Provide teachers with constructive feedback.	28	61%	39%	57	58%	37%	154	69%	29%
Support teachers to improve instruction.	28	57%	43%	56	46%	45%	154	58%	37%
Address the emotional wellbeing needs of teachers and students.	28	57%	32%	57	39%	47%	154	47%	38%
Engage my school's faculty in discussions about pedagogy.	28	61%	32%	57	44%	42%	154	47%	40%
I believe MLDS…									
Contributes to improved student achievement at my school.	28	54%	43%	57	40%	47%	154	49%	44%
Makes me more likely to stay as a school leader in Missouri.	28	61%	29%	57	46%	46%	154	62%	28%
Supports the growth of school leaders in Missouri.	27	63%	37%	57	53%	44%	154	69%	28%
This Year's Experience │ *This year, MLDS helps me to…*									
Remain focused on instruction and student learning.	28	54%	43%	57	42%	51%	154	50%	44%
Address the emotional wellbeing needs of students and teachers.	28	50%	36%	57	39%	46%	154	44%	41%
Engage in learning activities that are relevant and applicable to my school.	28	57%	39%	57	46%	47%	154	54%	40%
Learn through a blend of in-person and remote training formats.	28	50%	39%	57	40%	32%	154	46%	35%
Learn about research-based practices and strategies on leadership development, instruction, and student learning.	28	61%	36%	57	53%	42%	154	58%	36%

		City			Suburban			Rural	
	n	SA	A	n	SA	A	n	SA	A
Support from MLDS Specialists and Mentors │ The **MLDS specialists** in my Regional Professional Development Center…									
Understand schools like mine. **	28	64%	25%	56	50%	38%	154	67%	29%
Help me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	28	61%	39%	56	55%	41%	154	66%	32%
Effectively support me in my leadership role.	28	57%	43%	56	57%	34%	154	70%	27%
My mentor…									
Understands schools like mine. *	21	86%	14%	50	56%	34%	145	70%	23%
Helps me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	20	80%	15%	50	60%	32%	145	65%	30%
Effectively supports me in my leadership role.	21	81%	14%	50	58%	30%	145	68%	26%

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 8. Perceptions of Principals by Race/Ethnicity, 2022−23

		White			Other Race/Ethnicity		
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
Overall Perceptions								
The purpose of MLDS is clear to me.	219	74%	25%	0%	17	53%	47%	0%
I know where to get information about MLDS. *	219	60%	34%	3%	17	24%	71%	6%
I receive information about MLDS on a regular basis. *	219	63%	31%	3%	17	35%	59%	6%
I receive support from my district in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school. *	219	60%	29%	9%	17	18%	71%	6%
I receive support from my RPDC in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school. *	219	56%	33%	10%	17	29%	47%	24%
MLDS helps me to see the connection between developing my leadership skills and improving student learning at my school. *	219	67%	30%	2%	17	35%	65%	0%
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. *	220	64%	30%	4%	17	35%	59%	6%

	White			Other Race/Ethnicity			
	n	SA	A	U	n	SA	A	U
The MLDS methods (e.g., regional meetings, state conferences, learning labs, one-to-one mentoring and coaching) are helpful in developing my leadership skills. *	220	67%	30%	3%	17	29%	65%	6%
I am regularly using what I learn from MLDS at my school. *	218	56%	36%	7%	17	18%	71%	6%
Professional Development								
MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices. *	220	72%	26%	1%	17	47%	53%	0%
The professional development content is relevant to my needs as a school leader.	220	65%	30%	3%	17	47%	47%	6%
The training materials are relevant to me.	219	62%	34%	3%	17	53%	47%	0%
I use what I learn from MLDS to strengthen my leadership practices. *	219	64%	32%	3%	17	35%	65%	0%
I network with other MLDS principals. *	219	62%	27%	7%	17	24%	47%	24%
MLDS professional development promotes a common leadership vocabulary in Missouri. *	219	63%	31%	5%	17	24%	71%	6%
Benefits and Value │ I believe MLDS…								
Provides opportunities for me to grow as a professional. *	220	70%	28%	2%	17	41%	59%	0%
Promotes collaboration with my peers.	219	74%	21%	4%	17	53%	47%	0%
Provides customized support to address my specific needs.	220	52%	35%	6%	17	29%	59%	12%
Strengthens my instructional leadership practices.	219	62%	33%	4%	17	35%	65%	0%
Makes me a better school leader. *	218	67%	30%	3%	17	35%	65%	0%
Impact │ I believe MLDS increases my ability to…								
Observe teachers in the classroom. *	220	61%	35%	3%	17	29%	71%	0%
Identify different levels of quality of classroom instruction. *	219	57%	41%	2%	17	29%	71%	0%
Describe different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	220	57%	39%	3%	17	41%	59%	0%
Provide teachers with constructive feedback. *	220	68%	30%	1%	17	35%	65%	0%
Support teachers to improve instruction.	219	57%	37%	4%	17	35%	65%	0%
Address the emotional wellbeing needs of teachers and students.	220	49%	37%	9%	17	18%	76%	6%
Engage my school's faculty in discussions about pedagogy.	220	50%	37%	9%	17	24%	71%	6%
I believe MLDS…								

		White				Other Race/Ethnicity		
	n	**SA**	**A**	**U**	**n**	**SA**	**A**	**U**
Contributes to improved student achievement at my school.	220	50%	41%	8%	17	18%	82%	0%
Makes me more likely to stay as a school leader in Missouri. *	220	61%	30%	8%	17	24%	71%	6%
Supports the growth of school leaders in Missouri. *	219	68%	30%	2%	17	29%	71%	0%
This Year's Experience │ *This year, MLDS helps me to...*								
Remain focused on instruction and student learning.	220	51%	43%	5%	17	24%	76%	0%
Address the emotional wellbeing needs of students and teachers.	220	46%	39%	9%	17	18%	76%	6%
Engage in learning activities that are relevant and applicable to my school.	220	55%	40%	5%	17	29%	65%	6%
Learn through a blend of in-person and remote training formats.	220	48%	33%	14%	17	18%	65%	12%
Learn about research-based practices and strategies on leadership development, instruction, and student learning.	220	59%	36%	5%	17	35%	59%	6%
Support from MLDS Specialists and Mentors │ *The MLDS specialists in my Regional Professional Development Center...*								
Understand schools like mine. *	219	65%	29%	5%	17	35%	59%	6%
Help me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations. *	219	66%	32%	1%	17	24%	76%	0%
Effectively support me in my leadership role. *	219	68%	28%	3%	17	29%	65%	6%
My mentor...								
Understands schools like mine.	203	70%	23%	4%	12	50%	50%	0%
Helps me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	202	67%	27%	5%	12	42%	58%	0%
Effectively supports me in my leadership role.	203	68%	24%	6%	12	42%	50%	8%

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 9. Perceptions of Principals by Years of Experience with MLDS, 2022−23

	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.	68%	29%	68%	32%	75%	25%	86%	14%
I know where to get information about MLDS. * ** ****	47%	45%	58%	37%	55%	43%	89%	8%
I receive information about MLDS on a regular basis. *	49%	40%	75%	23%	55%	40%	78%	19%
I receive support from my district in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school.	50%	35%	60%	32%	53%	35%	75%	19%
I receive support from my RPDC in applying what I have learned from MLDS at my school. *	43%	42%	60%	28%	50%	38%	81%	14%
MLDS helps me to see the connection between developing my leadership skills and improving student learning at my school.	57%	38%	65%	33%	68%	30%	81%	19%
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.	59%	33%	58%	39%	63%	30%	72%	22%
The MLDS methods (e.g., regional meetings, state conferences, learning labs, one-to-one mentoring and coaching) are helpful in developing my leadership skills.	62%	32%	58%	40%	60%	38%	81%	17%
I am regularly using what I learn from MLDS at my school.	49%	43%	52%	38%	50%	40%	67%	22%
Professional Development								
MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices.	63%	34%	74%	25%	68%	33%	83%	17%
The professional development content is relevant to my needs as a school leader.	58%	37%	65%	32%	60%	38%	83%	14%
The training materials are relevant to me.	55%	39%	65%	33%	58%	43%	77%	20%
I use what I learn from MLDS to strengthen my leadership practices.	56%	39%	61%	33%	58%	43%	81%	19%
I network with other MLDS principals.	58%	29%	60%	32%	50%	35%	71%	17%
MLDS professional development promotes a common leadership vocabulary in Missouri.	55%	38%	63%	33%	53%	35%	78%	19%
Benefits and Value │ *I believe MLDS…*								
Provides opportunities for me to grow as a professional. * ****	62%	34%	68%	32%	58%	40%	89%	8%
Promotes collaboration with my peers.	70%	26%	70%	26%	68%	25%	86%	8%

	1 Year		2 Years		3 Years		4+ Years	
	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A
Provides customized support to address my specific needs. * ****	48%	35%	49%	39%	38%	50%	72%	22%
Strengthens my instructional leadership practices. * ****	53%	40%	65%	32%	49%	46%	83%	17%
Makes me a better school leader.	61%	34%	65%	30%	54%	44%	81%	19%
Impact │ *I believe MLDS increases my ability to…*								
Observe teachers in the classroom.	58%	37%	58%	39%	48%	48%	75%	22%
Identify different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	51%	46%	56%	44%	45%	50%	69%	28%
Describe different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	52%	43%	56%	42%	50%	43%	69%	28%
Provide teachers with constructive feedback.	65%	30%	65%	35%	55%	45%	81%	19%
Support teachers to improve instruction.	53%	38%	54%	42%	45%	50%	72%	28%
Address the emotional wellbeing needs of teachers and students.	41%	41%	46%	42%	48%	38%	61%	36%
Engage my school's faculty in discussions about pedagogy. *	42%	42%	49%	40%	43%	48%	69%	22%
I believe MLDS…								
Contributes to improved student achievement at my school.	44%	44%	49%	44%	40%	55%	61%	33%
Makes me more likely to stay as a school leader in Missouri.	50%	42%	58%	30%	63%	23%	75%	19%
Supports the growth of school leaders in Missouri.	58%	38%	65%	33%	68%	30%	80%	20%
This Year's Experience │ *This year, MLDS helps me to…*								
Remain focused on instruction and student learning.	47%	47%	49%	47%	40%	48%	61%	36%
Address the emotional wellbeing needs of students and teachers.	42%	42%	46%	40%	38%	48%	53%	36%
Engage in learning activities that are relevant and applicable to my school.	52%	41%	49%	49%	48%	45%	64%	31%
Learn through a blend of in-person and remote training formats.	44%	34%	44%	35%	35%	40%	61%	31%
Learn about research-based practices and strategies on leadership development, instruction, and student learning.	52%	42%	58%	39%	53%	40%	75%	22%

	1 Year		2 Years		3 Years		4+ Years	
	SA	**A**	**SA**	**A**	**SA**	**A**	**SA**	**A**
Support from MLDS Specialists and Mentors | *The **MLDS specialists** in my Regional Professional Development Center...*								
Understand schools like mine.	59%	36%	60%	32%	60%	33%	81%	11%
Help me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	59%	39%	60%	39%	58%	38%	83%	14%
Effectively support me in my leadership role.	62%	32%	65%	33%	60%	33%	83%	17%
My mentor...								
Understands schools like mine.	65%	29%	63%	26%	68%	29%	90%	7%
Helps me to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	65%	28%	57%	35%	58%	39%	86%	10%
Effectively supports me in my leadership role.	66%	26%	61%	28%	58%	39%	87%	10%

Note. The question was, "How many years, in total, have you participated in the MLDS program? (If 2022–23 is your first year in MLDS, mark "1 year.") As the percentages of principals who disagree or strongly disagree with the 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) = 122. N (2 Years) = 61. N (3 Years) = 49. N (4+ Years) = 38. 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 "4+ Years" and "1 Year", ** between "4+ Years" and "2Years", and **** between "4+ Years" and "3 Years".

Table 10. Perceptions of MLDS Specialists, 2022–23

	n	**A**	**U**	**D**
Overall Perceptions				
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	96%	4%	0%
MLDS helps principals to see the connection between developing their leadership skills and improving student learning at their school.	27	93%	7%	0%
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 principals' leadership capacity.	27	89%	4%	7%
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	89%	4%	7%
Principals are regularly using what they learn from MLDS at their school.	27	81%	15%	4%
Professional Development				

	n	A	U	D
MLDS professional development focuses on research-based leadership practices.	27	85%	7%	7%
The professional development content is relevant to principals' needs as school leaders.	27	81%	19%	0%
I help principals to apply the content to practical situations.	27	100%	0%	0%
I understand the schools of the principals I support.	27	93%	7%	0%
The training materials are relevant to the principals.	27	74%	19%	7%
Principals use what they learn from MLDS to strengthen their leadership practices.	27	81%	19%	0%
Principals network with other MLDS principals.	27	93%	7%	0%
MLDS professional development promotes a common leadership vocabulary in Missouri.	27	85%	15%	0%
Benefits and Value │ *I believe MLDS…*				
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	89%	7%	4%
Strengthens principals' instructional leadership practices.	27	85%	11%	4%
Makes principals better school leaders.	27	96%	0%	4%
Impact │ *I believe MLDS increases principals' ability to…*				
Observe teachers in the classroom.	27	96%	4%	0%
Identify different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	27	93%	4%	4%
Describe different levels of quality of classroom instruction.	27	89%	7%	4%
Provide teachers with constructive feedback.	27	93%	7%	0%
Support teachers to improve instruction.	26	85%	12%	4%
Address the emotional wellbeing needs of teachers and students.	27	81%	11%	7%
Engage their school's faculty in discussions about pedagogy.	27	74%	22%	4%
I believe MLDS…				
Contributes to improved student achievement at the schools.	27	89%	7%	4%
Makes principals more likely to stay as school leaders in Missouri.	27	85%	11%	4%
Supports the growth of school leaders in Missouri.	27	96%	4%	0%
This Year's Experience │ *This year, MLDS helps principals to…*				
Remain focused on instruction and student learning.	27	78%	19%	4%
Address the emotional wellbeing needs of students and teachers.	27	70%	19%	11%
Engage in learning activities that are relevant and applicable to their school.	27	89%	7%	4%
Learn through a blend of in-person and remote training formats.	27	70%	15%	15%
Learn about research-based practices and strategies on leadership development, instruction, and student learning.	27	85%	11%	4%

	n	A	U	D
Support from Mentors to MLDS Principals │ *Mentors in my RPDC...*				
Understand schools like the MLDS principals'.	27	93%	7%	0%
Help principals to apply the MLDS content to practical situations.	27	85%	11%	4%
Effectively support principals in their leadership roles.	27	96%	4%	0%