

# Preparing Tomorrow's Principals Today: A Formative Review of the Missouri Leadership Development System (MLDS)

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## About MLDS

- Primary goal: to develop and support effective school leaders throughout the state
- MLDS supports principals at four levels:
  - Aspiring
  - Emerging
  - Developing
  - Transformational

## About the Study

- Examines fidelity of MLDS implementation
- Focuses on MLDS principals at Emerging and Developing Levels
- Explores enhancing factors and emerging issues
- Provides recommendations to strengthen implementation

# Methodology

- Statewide surveys of principals, superintendents, and specialists
- Interviews with principals, superintendents, and specialists
- Participant satisfaction surveys carried out by DESE over a three-year period
- A review of multiple MLDS-related documents

## Key Survey Response Rates

- MLDS Principals: 521, 74.2% response rate
  - Emerging Level–Year I: 181, 87.4%
  - Emerging Level–Year II: 195, 78.3%
  - Developing Level: 145, 58.9%
- MLDS Superintendents: 131, 55% response rate
- Specialists: 11, 100% response rate

# Overall Perceptions

- Principals and superintendents agree that:
  - The purpose of MLDS is clear
  - They know where to get information about MLDS
  - They see a connection, through MLDS, between leadership development and student learning
  - Principals receive support from district or RPDC when applying learnings from MLDS
- Communication is more effective with MLDS participants

## Fidelity of Implementation

- Principals and superintendents, across all regions, indicate that MLDS is being implemented with fidelity
- Principals report they are regularly applying what they learn from MLDS at their school

# Professional Development

- Principals agree that MLDS professional development:
  - Focuses on research-based leadership practices
  - Has content and training materials relevant to their needs as school leaders
  - Strengthens their leadership practices
  - Promotes a common leadership vocabulary across the state
- Principal-to-principal networking is effective

# Importance of MLDS Components

- Participants believe MLDS components are making a difference
  - Competencies
  - Learning experiences
  - Treatments

## Multiple Impacts

- Principals and superintendents believe that MLDS:
  - Contributes to improvements in instructional leadership and classroom instruction
  - Contributes to improved student achievement
  - Supports the growth of school leaders in Missouri
  - Makes principals more likely to stay as school leaders in Missouri

## Enhancing Factors

- Consistency in implementation
- Focus on instruction
- Emphasis on research-based strategies
- Networking and collaboration among principals
- Hands-on learning experiences
- Customized support from mentors and specialists

## Emerging Issues

- Customized support to a growing number of MLDS principals
- Groupings of principals in MLDS trainings
- Time away from the building
- Amount of mentor contact with principals

## Issues and Recommendations

*The dominant recommendation emerging from the interviews and survey responses is to stay the course.*

- Principal Support
- Mentors and Specialists
- Superintendents and Evolving District Needs

# Issues and Recommendations

- *Issue One: Principal Support*
  - Continue to focus on effective, research-based practices and strategies
  - Further strengthen the relevance and applicability of the learning activities
  - Experiment with training formats
  - Consider providing certification or micro-credentials for MLDS participants

# Issues and Recommendations

- *Issue Two: Mentors and Specialists*
  - Provide more guidance and training to mentors
  - Keep building the specialist team

# Issues and Recommendations

- *Issue Three: Superintendents and Evolving District Needs*
  - Convene superintendents to understand what districts need from the program

# Summary

- Leaders and practitioners across the state believe that MLDS is:
  - Implemented with fidelity
  - Effective in supporting and developing principals
  - Moving in the right direction

## Provide Customized Support to a Growing Number of MLDS Principals

- What are the best ways to do this at scale?
- How best to ensure quality?
- What are the best ways to document recurring needs of principals across the state?

# Experiment with Training Formats

- Where and how would you start?
- Why?
- What would you think about doing and not do?

# Convene Superintendents to Understand Evolving District Needs

- How?
- Using what vehicles for communication?
- What generates the most candor?

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