JANUARY 2025

New Leaders Evaluation *for the* Washington State Partnership

Prepared by:
Pacific Research & Evaluation

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Executive Summary

New Leaders is a nonprofit organization that develops transformational school leaders and advances the policies and practices that allow school leaders to succeed. Beginning in 2019, New Leaders partnered with the Ballmer Foundation to provide leadership opportunities in districts and schools across Washington State. In 2023 and 2024, New Leaders contracted Pacific Research and Evaluation (PRE) to conduct a mixed-methods study assessing trends and outcomes of New Leaders' involvement in Washington schools. Key data collection and sources include an online survey of New Leaders participants, focus groups and interviews conducted with school leaders and educators, and student outcome data available through the Washington State Report Card website. This study explores the extent to which participation in New Leaders resulted in changes in leadership practices, the extent to which those changes have been sustained over time, and the impact that those changes have had on school and student outcomes.

The summary of the findings presented below is organized based on the five levels of Guskey's[1] model for evaluating professional learning programs: Participants' Reactions (Level 1); Participants' Learning (Level 2); Organizational Support and Change (Level 3); Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills (Level 4); and Student Learning Outcomes (Level 5). Additionally, findings from two school case studies can be found at the end of this report, beginning on page 71.

Level 1: Participants' Reactions

Reactions from school leaders regarding their New Leaders participation were generally positive. Participants shared that they valued the opportunity for professional networking, mentorship, and coaching. Most school leaders found what they learned in New Leaders to be relevant and immediately applicable to their work. Nearly 85% of survey participants indicated that they would recommend New Leaders to others in their profession, citing benefits such as enhanced collaboration and practical resources. However, school leaders also noted challenges, particularly when it came to finding enough time to complete their New Leaders modules and navigating the online learning hub.

[1] Guskey, T. R. (2000). *Evaluating professional development.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Level 2: Participants' Learning

Participation in New Leaders notably influenced school leaders' mindsets, knowledge, and skills. Over 90% of survey participants indicated that, as a result of their participation in New Leaders, they had shifted their mindset in ways that improved their leadership practices. School leaders highlighted the impact that New Leaders had on their skill development, particularly in the areas of action planning and data analysis. Many participants also appreciated learning to apply an equity-lens to their work, as well as strategies to promote team accountability. Further, as a result of their learning, over 75% of surveyed school leaders felt more confident in their ability to support their staff with strategies and techniques to improve student outcomes.

Level 3: Organizational Support and Change

School leaders largely felt that their supervisors were supportive of their New Leaders participation and perceived a high degree of buy-in from district administrators toward the New Leaders program. Buy-in from teachers and school community members, however, was generally not perceived to be high, and several noted encountering resistance when attempting to implement new initiatives or changes based on their New Leaders learnings. Encouragingly, many participants shared that New Leaders had given them tools and strategies that had helped them to promote more buy-in over time, such as by engaging school teams in distributed leadership practices.

Level 4: Use of New Knowledge and Skills

New Leaders participants used their new knowledge and skills to implement a range of changes that commonly included establishing or transforming distributed leadership teams, engaging in equity-focused conversations and initiatives, and increasing the use of data to inform instruction. School leaders noted that they made changes beyond those that directly came from New Leaders, but often they found their coaching or other elements of New Leaders to be synergetic with those other initiatives. Further, there appears to be a cascading effect, in that changes school leaders made as a more direct result of working with New Leaders have led to multiple other positive changes. For example, establishing leadership teams often led to the implementation of other innovative projects and approaches.

Level 5: Student Learning Outcomes

While direct links between New Leaders participation and student outcomes were difficult to isolate, some participants perceived improvements related to student

engagement, social-emotional learning, and academic performance. Several school leaders noted that they were in the early stages of implementing changes, which they hoped would positively impact student outcomes in the future. Just over half of surveyed school leaders expressed agreement that students at their schools had benefited academically from the strategies and skills they applied after participating in New Leaders. Further, some school leaders noted positive shifts in student behavior and a reduction in behavioral incidents at school.

Research suggests that there is often a time lag between when professional development occurs and when measurable student outcomes may be observed.[2] Our analysis of available student data did not provide evidence of any impacts of New Leaders on student achievement outcomes nor on student disciplinary outcomes; an indication that it may be too soon to see results in this area. However, it is clear that student achievement outcomes declined during the COVID-19 pandemic and have not yet returned to their pre-COVID-19 levels. Also, it is apparent when looking at the data from students of color and students from low-income families that an achievement gap exists between those student groups and their peers. These findings highlight the continued need for efforts to support instructional excellence and promote equitable outcomes within Washington State's schools.

Scaling Impact

To maximize the reach and impact of New Leaders, several school leaders emphasized the importance of cultivating strong collaboration among school leaders, teachers, central office staff, community organizations, and families. Their suggestions included: hosting more meetings between schools and community interest holders to strengthen partnerships and buy-in; increasing collaboration and relationship-building between administrators in schools and central office leadership; and offering additional training and activities for teachers to provide them with more knowledge and skill related to New Leaders initiatives.

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[2] Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving Impact Studies of Teachers' Professional Development: Toward Better Conceptualizations and Measures. *Educational Researcher, 38*(3), 181-199. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08331140

Introduction

New Leaders is a nonprofit organization that develops transformational school leaders and advances the policies and practices that allow school leaders to succeed. As such, New Leaders equips education leaders—principals, superintendents, and other school administrators—to work with teachers to ensure high academic achievement for all children, especially students in poverty and students of color. Beginning in 2019, New Leaders partnered with the Ballmer Foundation to provide leadership development opportunities in districts and schools across Washington State. Over the course of those five years, New Leaders has partnered with Kent School District, Vancouver Public Schools, and a consortium of school districts that partner with the Rural Alliance—a rural educational leadership collaborative in Washington State.

Through this Washington State partnership, New Leaders has administered a variety of programs to support leadership development within Vancouver, Kent, and Rural Alliance schools. While content varies by program type and audience, a common emphasis is on cultivating skills and strategies related to five major areas described by New Leaders' Transformational Leadership Framework as central to sustaining school improvement and effective leadership: 1) Learning and teaching; 2) School culture; 3) Talent management; 4) Planning and operations; and 5) Personal leadership. New Leaders participants learn to develop and hone multiple facets of their personal leadership skills, including belief-based and goal-driven leadership, equity-focused leadership, interpersonal leadership, adaptive leadership, and resilient leadership. Depending on their program, New Leaders participants may take part in any of the following components: online asynchronous work, one-on-one coaching, live and/or virtual learning sessions, communities of practice, reflective learning exercises, and more. Target audiences who have engaged in New Leaders programs in Washington State since 2019 have included school principals, assistant principals, superintendents, and other district leaders.

New Leaders contracted Pacific Research and Evaluation (PRE) to conduct a mixed-methods evaluation study to assess trends and outcomes of New Leaders' involvement in Washington schools. Specifically, this study explores the extent to which participation in New Leaders resulted in changes in leadership practices, the extent to which those changes have been sustained over time, and the impact that those changes have had on school and student outcomes. Further, this study aims to shed light on leadership

practices and circumstances and/or conditions that contribute to improved outcomes, and to understand how effective leadership practices can be scaled to maximize the impact of New Leaders programming for schools and communities.

This report begins with an overview of the research methods used in the evaluation, followed by a detailed presentation of the findings. Next, two case studies are presented highlighting the transformative experiences of two unique schools, including both a focus on the impact of their principals' leadership practices as well as the challenges they have faced. The report concludes with a section offering key insights and recommendations for future practice.

Methodology

This research received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through Solutions IRB under the rules for expedited review on April 27, 2024. Solutions IRB can be reached at reviews@solutionsirb.com; the protocol number for reference is: 2024-Apr -0464.

New Leaders Participant Survey

Current and former participants of New Leaders programming in Washington State were invited to complete an online survey to share their perspectives and experiences with New Leaders. The survey was open from May 1 to June 14, 2024, and was distributed by PRE via personalized emails. Invitations were sent to individuals who had either completed their New Leaders programming between 2019 and the survey period or were actively participating in the program at the time of the survey. Individuals who had withdrawn from their New Leaders programs were not included in the sample.

New Leaders provided PRE with a list of 207 valid email addresses for survey distribution. Of these, 52 individuals completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 25.1%. To thank participants for their time, each respondent received a $20 Amazon e-gift card.

Of the 52 current and past New Leaders participants who responded to the survey, the largest proportion worked in school districts that were affiliated with the Rural Alliance (44.2%), followed by those who worked for Vancouver Public Schools and Kent School District, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. New Leaders Survey – School District Affiliation (N=52)

District Affiliation	%
Rural Alliance	44.2%
Vancouver Public Schools	36.5%
Kent School District	19.2%

Surveyed New Leaders participants were mostly (at the time of the survey) school principals (59.6%), followed by other district administrators (see Table 2). Participants who selected "other role than listed above" included an Assistant Director of Multilingual Education, a Director of Education at a non-profit, and a Head of School.

Table 2. New Leaders Survey – Current Role (N=52)

Role	%
Principal	59.6%
Assistant Principal	5.8%
Other school administrator	1.9%
Superintendent	1.9%
Assistant Superintendent	1.9%
Other district administrator	21.2%
Other role than listed above	7.7%

More current New Leaders participants (defined as those who participated in any New Leaders programming during the 2023-24 school year) responded to the survey, compared to former participants, as Table 3 displays.

Table 3. New Leaders Survey – Timeframe of New Leaders Participation (N=52)

Participation Timeframe	%
Current Participant	69.2%
Past Participant	30.8%

New Leaders Participant Focus Groups & Interviews

Current and former participants of New Leaders programming in Washington State were invited to share their perspectives and experiences through virtual focus groups or interviews. Invitations were sent to the same group of 207 current and past participants who were also invited to complete the survey. Of those invited, eleven school leaders agreed to participate in focus groups or interviews. Between June 10 and August 5, 2024, PRE conducted seven individual interviews and two focus groups, each with two participants.

Focus group and interview participants included representatives from Vancouver Public Schools (N=3), Kent School District (N=1), and the Rural Alliance (N=7). The group comprised nine school principals and two district administrators. All participants had engaged with New Leaders during the most recent school year (2023-24), though their start dates varied. Two participants began in the 2019-20 school year, one started in 2020-21, three joined in 2022-23, and five were new participants in 2023-24. Interviews and focus groups were one hour long. To thank school leaders for their time, each participant received a $50 Amazon e-gift card.

Student Outcome Data

The evaluation team requested data-sharing agreements from school districts that participated in New Leaders in Washington State. However, districts either did not respond, declined the requests, or did not follow through in providing the requested data following a previous agreement to share data. Districts that declined generally cited two main reasons: concerns that they had not had sufficient time to implement changes that could impact student outcomes, and a lack of staff or capacity to fulfill the data requests. As a result, the student outcome data used in this evaluation was drawn from publicly available sources, specifically the Washington State Report Card website.

Student academic outcomes were assessed using data from the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math, administered to students in grades three through eight and grade ten. Discipline data was also analyzed, focusing on the percentage of students excluded from school (suspended or expelled) due to behavioral violations. Comparisons were made between districts and schools that have participated in New Leaders and those that have not, with outcomes presented over time to understand trends. Additionally, data is presented in such a way as to shed light on outcomes for historically underserved student groups, including students of color and students from low-income households.

Further details on the analysis of student outcome data are included in the Level 5 findings section, starting on page 41.

Case Study School Recruitment

The evaluation team sought nominations from New Leaders program staff to identify schools for three to five case studies. The criteria focused on schools with principals who had been highly engaged in the New Leaders program and those serving a considerable proportion of students of color and students from low-income households. New Leaders staff provided three nominations, but all three nominated principals ultimately declined participation due to time constraints. The evaluation team also requested nominations from district points of contact in Vancouver Public Schools, Kent School District, and leaders of the Rural Alliance but did not receive any additional recommendations.

As an alternative, the evaluation team reached out directly to school leaders who had participated in the survey, focus groups, or interviews, providing details about what case study participation would entail and inviting them to nominate their own schools. Two principals agreed to take part: one from Vancouver Public Schools and one from a Rural Alliance school. Data collection specific to case study schools includes the teacher focus groups and the leadership rubric, described below.

Teacher Focus Groups & Interviews

Teachers from the two case study schools were invited to participate in virtual focus groups or interviews to share their perspectives on the leadership practices at their schools. PRE facilitated one interview and four focus groups, each with two teacher participants, involving a total of nine teachers across the two schools. As a token of appreciation for their time and insights, participating teachers received $50 Amazon gift cards.

Leadership Rubric

Principals from case study schools were asked to independently fill out a rubric that was developed by New Leaders called the Personal Leadership Self-Assessment for New Leaders Transformational Leadership Framework (Appendix A). Principals were provided with instructions for filling out the rubric at the time and location of their choosing. Both principals filled out the rubric and returned them to be included in our case studies. Participating principals received $50 Amazon gift cards as a gesture of appreciation.

Findings

The findings sections that follow are organized based on research questions that were determined at the onset of this study and which reflect the five levels of Guskey's[3] model for evaluating professional learning programs: Participants' Reactions (Level 1); Participants' Learning (Level 2); Organizational Support and Change (Level 3); Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills (Level 4); and Student Learning Outcomes (Level 5).

Next, findings are presented for an additional research question related to scaling New Leaders' impact. Results from two school case studies are then shared. This report concludes with a recommendations section highlighting key findings and insights.

Readers of this report may be familiar with the Kirkpatrick[4] model, which offers a framework that is similar to the Guskey model for evaluating training and learning programs. Table 4 offers a quick reference for understanding the basic similarities and differences between the Guskey and Kirkpatrick frameworks.

[3] Guskey, T. R. (2000). *Evaluating professional development.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
[4] Kirkpatrick, D. (1996). *Revisiting Kirkpatrick's four-level-model*. Training & Development, 1, 54-57.

Table 4. The Guskey and Kirkpatrick Frameworks

Guskey's Model	Kirkpatrick's Model
Level 1. Participants' Reactions	**Level 1.** Reaction
Level 2. Participants' Learning	**Level 2.** Learning
Level 3. Organizational Support and Change	(No equivalent)
Level 4. Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills	**Level 3.** Behavior
Level 5. Student Learning Outcomes	**Level 4.** Results/Impact

LEVEL 1: Participants' Reactions

What did participants hope to get out of their New Leaders programming?

The eleven New Leaders participants who took part in focus groups or interviews shared what motivated them to be involved in New Leaders and what they had hoped to get out of their programming. Most commonly, participants shared that they became interested in New Leaders because of the opportunity it presented to network with their professional peers. Many participants cited feelings of isolation in their roles, particularly in rural or small-school settings. For some participants, the Rural Alliance's endorsement of New Leaders and the knowledge that there would be a focus on the needs of rural schools was a major motivational factor. The New Leaders program was seen as an opportunity to connect with and learn from professional peers who may be dealing with some of the same challenges or circumstances, as the following quote demonstrates.

> *"I was hoping to develop some connections with other people who had similar jobs and similar-sized schools to me that I could lean on as resources to help me do my job better."*

Several participants who were newer to their positions shared in focus groups and interviews that they were motivated to take part in New Leaders because they saw it as a chance to gain important insight to help them navigate their new roles. These individuals mentioned appreciating the opportunity to receive guidance and mentorship, a theme that was shared by those new to their roles and seasoned school leaders alike. The following quotes from two focus group participants highlight participants' enthusiasm for mentorship and coaching at the onset of their New Leaders participation.

> *"I had a really positive mentoring experience when I was a first-year teacher… Having been an instructional coach myself, I believe in the coaching model."*

> *"I love coaching. I love the idea of being able to have a conversation with someone who's had a similar job and can offer expertise."*

A few focus group and interview participants shared specifically that they had been looking forward to a chance to have conversations about how to promote **equity and inclusive practices** in their schools. Finally, a couple of focus group and interview participants shared that they hadn't been sure what to expect from the programming but had been interested in the chance to learn new things and bounce ideas off of other people in their cohorts.

Did the programming meet participants' expectations?

New Leaders participants who took part in focus groups and interviews (N=11) reflected on whether their experiences with New Leaders had met their expectations. The majority of participants shared that the program had met, or in some cases exceed their expectations, citing a number of positive experiences. Notably, several focus group members mentioned that the program had provided the networking opportunities that they had hoped for, and also had fostered a **strong sense of community, collaboration, and shared learning** among professional peers. Some shared that the network of connections they had made through their New Leaders participation has continued beyond their completion of the program. The following comments from two focus group participants are exemplary of the collaborative and supportive New Leaders community that multiple individuals described.

"[Our cohort was] a group of people who really shared practice, was super collaborative, and worked really well together."

"I definitely feel that New Leaders has given me a group of colleagues that I can email, call, or text at any time."

Also during focus groups and interviews, New Leaders participants emphasized the benefit of the **high-quality coaching and mentorship** they had received. According to participants, New Leaders coaches have played a critical role in helping them navigate challenges, craft intentional plans, and reflect on their practice. A couple of participants noted variability in the quality and structure of their coaching experiences; for instance, some coaches were more diligent about keeping running agendas and sharing notes, which were appreciated by participants, while other coaches facilitated experiences that were somewhat less structured and cohesive. However, the vast majority of comments from participants related to the New Leaders coaching they had received were highly positive, as the following quotes illustrate.

"Coaching allowed me to process with a mentor who had the experience to understand what it feels like and be in my shoes. They helped me craft intentional plans and provided resources to help me achieve my goals. They also asked some really hard, critical questions to help me be reflective. The regular check-ins also helped keep me on track. For me, it was so successful."

"I think my coach was probably the best part of my New Leaders experience because she made our entire focus directly applicable and tailored to my professional needs. It definitely far and away exceeded my expectations. She really helped me focus and grow in areas where I needed to develop as a leader."

Further, a number of focus group and interview participants highlighted the relevance and immediate applicability of what they learned through New Leaders. These participants **valued the actionable takeaways** they received from New Leaders, and the practical tools, strategies, and resources that they could directly apply to their work. Along similar lines, participants shared that they appreciated the personalized and adaptive support that they received, which made their experiences even more relevant and applicable to their unique needs.

> *"It really felt personable. It felt like there was meaning there; that I could buy into it."*

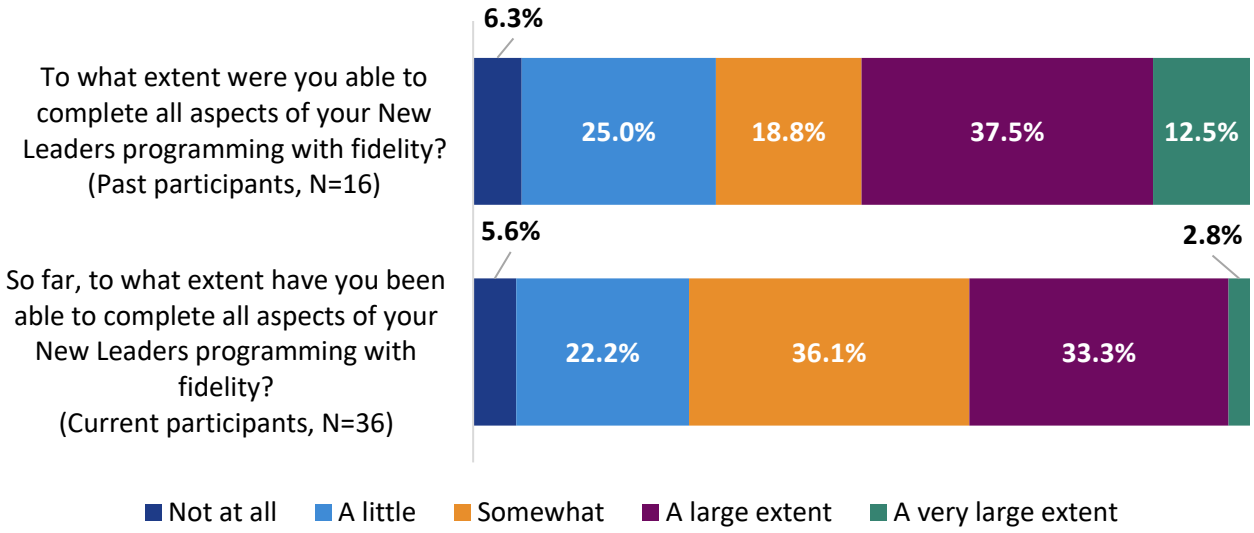
However, there were a few comments from participants in focus groups and interviews regarding the ways that New Leaders had not fully met their expectations. Particularly, these participants mentioned that **they did not have enough time in their schedule to complete assignments**, which hindered their ability to get as much out of New Leaders as they otherwise could have. One focus group member mentioned that the timing of their participation in New Leaders was not ideal, as it overlapped with a time of year when they were particularly busy (i.e., the end of the school year). These findings suggest that there may be a need for more flexibility and sensitivity to participants' workloads during peak times.

One interviewed principal (quoted below) from a rural school shared that, while they found New Leaders ultimately to be highly valuable, there we aspects of the delivery that they thought were more tailored to urban school settings.

> *"I think New Leaders is geared more toward the larger school districts. There's a lot of academic language that we don't use in rural schools as much. I felt like there's a lot of things that they talk about that seemed so commonplace to them, but not commonplace to the smaller schools."*

Survey findings also suggest that participants encountered barriers when it came to fully engaging in their New Leaders programming. As shown in Figure 1, less than half of all participants felt that they were able to complete a large extent or a very large extent of their New Leaders programming with fidelity.

Figure 1. Participants' Ability to Complete their New Leaders Programming (Ns vary)



Several New Leaders participants shared in open-ended survey responses some of the challenges they encountered during their New Leaders program. One surveyed participant suggested that being assigned to do work or presentations for New Leaders was not feasible, as they already had too much to get done. Another wrote that they "didn't have time to do the modules," and that challenges with the online materials and technology "got in the way of real learning." Several focus group and interview participants echoed the sentiment that, with the exception of virtual coaching, the online components of their New Leaders program were challenging to navigate.

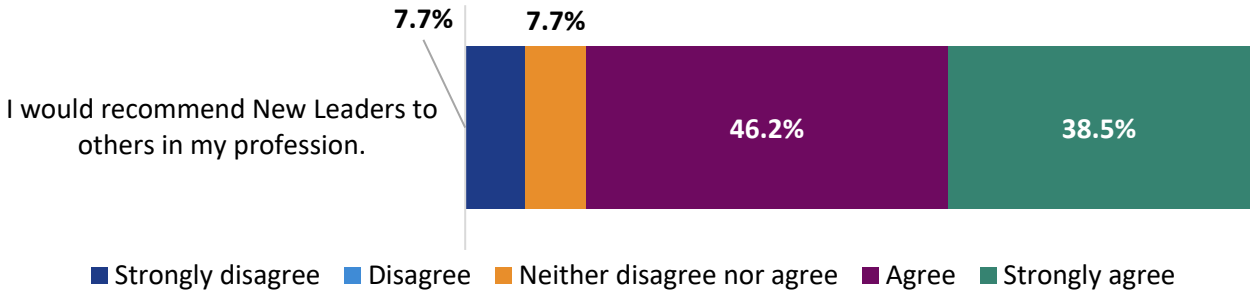
> *"I didn't love the remote work or the asynchronous hub as much as the real-time stuff, probably because I prefer people. It was hard to find things on the hub without help."*

> *"I'm not really a fan of the hub. I don't think it's very user-friendly. Every time we joined, we had to get reminded on how to use it or access it."*

Notably, New Leaders transitioned to a new online learning platform during the 2023-24 school year, as they felt the need to improve their system and make it more user-friendly. Therefore, it is possible that the challenges with online learning mentioned by focus group and interview participants were related to the older platform or were due to a learning curve associated with the first year of using a new online system.

Despite some challenges, most participants' reactions to the New Leaders program were positive, as noted above. Accordingly, a large majority (84.7%) of surveyed participants indicated that they would recommend New Leaders to others in their profession (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Recommending the New Leaders Program to Other Professionals (N=52)



LEVEL 2: Participants' Learning

How have participants' mindsets and perspectives been impacted as a result of New Leaders programming?

In focus groups and interviews, eleven New Leaders participants shared a range of ways their perspectives and mindsets shifted as a result of the New Leaders program. Their feedback reveals several key themes, including **shifts in perspectives around enhanced collaboration, equity, and leadership self-reflection and growth.**

In terms of how participants' perspectives shifted in relation to enhanced collaboration, several focus group participants shared that New Leaders helped them see the value in distributed leadership and involving others in the decision-making process. Some participants began deliberately taking time to connect with others in their building to improve their relationships, such as by leaving their door open more or taking time to go on coffee breaks with colleagues. One participant (whose quote follows) shared that, because of New Leaders, they started looking more at the bigger picture, which helped them to better understand the value in distributed leadership.

> *"At first [distributing leadership] felt backwards to me. It felt less efficient. But then I started looking at the long-term outcomes, and realized building relationships and teams will get you farther over time. That was a big aha change for me. I'm that type of person who likes to get it done, but stepping back and looking down the road was really big for me."*

Shifts in mindset and perspectives related to equity were commonly shared by focus group and interview participants. A few individuals noted that New Leaders helped them go beyond their traditional, politicized understandings of equity and to focus more on practical and systemic approaches. For instance (and as quoted below), one participant noted that they began **thinking of equity more in terms of access**, and another began more deeply considering the role of student voice.

> *"I was positively surprised by the New Leaders take on equity. I think equity tends to be overplayed. However, through New Leaders, I saw equity from a different lens, and I started to think of equity in terms of access to education, and I really, really appreciated it."*

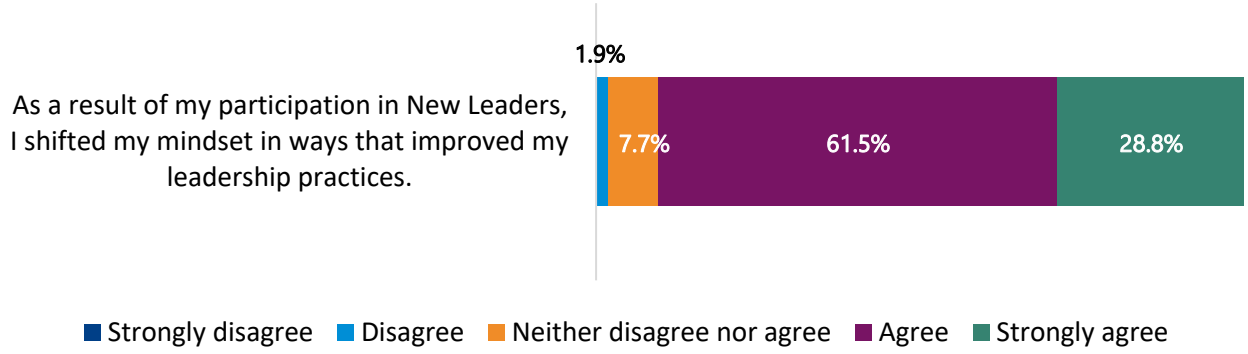
> *"It opened my mind and got me thinking about equity in new ways, and just having more straightforward conversations about equity. I think we've made some steps forward at my school, but we're not where we need to be yet. One of the things that New Leaders brought up more was student voice, and I really think that's how we're going to make the most progress on equity, by talking with the students."*

Finally, focus group participants highlighted how New Leaders prompted self-reflection, leading to shifts in their leadership mindset. One school leader mentioned that they had recently transitioned to the role of principal after having been a teacher for many years. They shared that New Leaders was instrumental in helping them to transition from a classroom-oriented mindset to a whole building perspective. Others shared that New Leaders allowed them to think through circumstances they have encountered, reflect on the decisions they made, and talk through alternate decisions and what the outcomes may have been.

Survey results lend support to the findings shared above by suggesting that a large majority of New Leaders participants experienced positive changes in their mindset as a result of the New Leaders program. As shown in Figure 3, over 90% (90.3%) of surveyed

school leaders agreed or strongly agreed that their participation in New Leaders programming led to a shift in their mindset, resulting in improvements in their leadership practices.

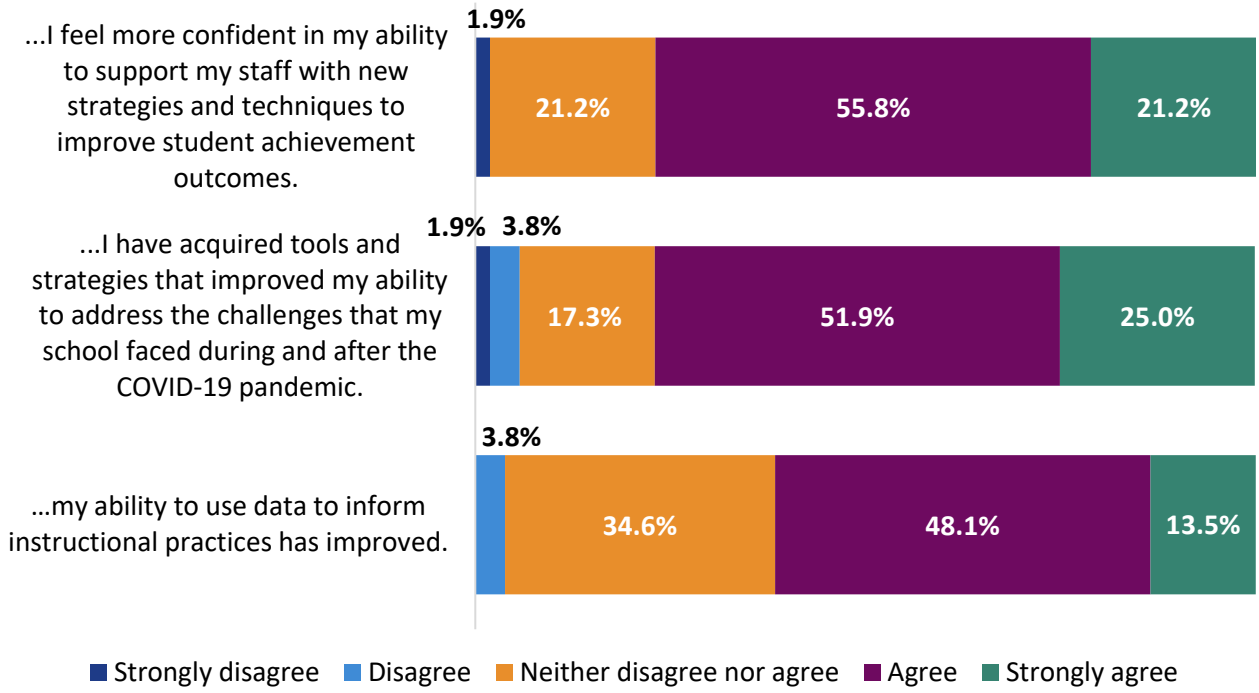
Figure 3. Changes in Mindset (N=52)



To what extent do school leaders perceive their knowledge and skills were impacted by New Leaders programming?

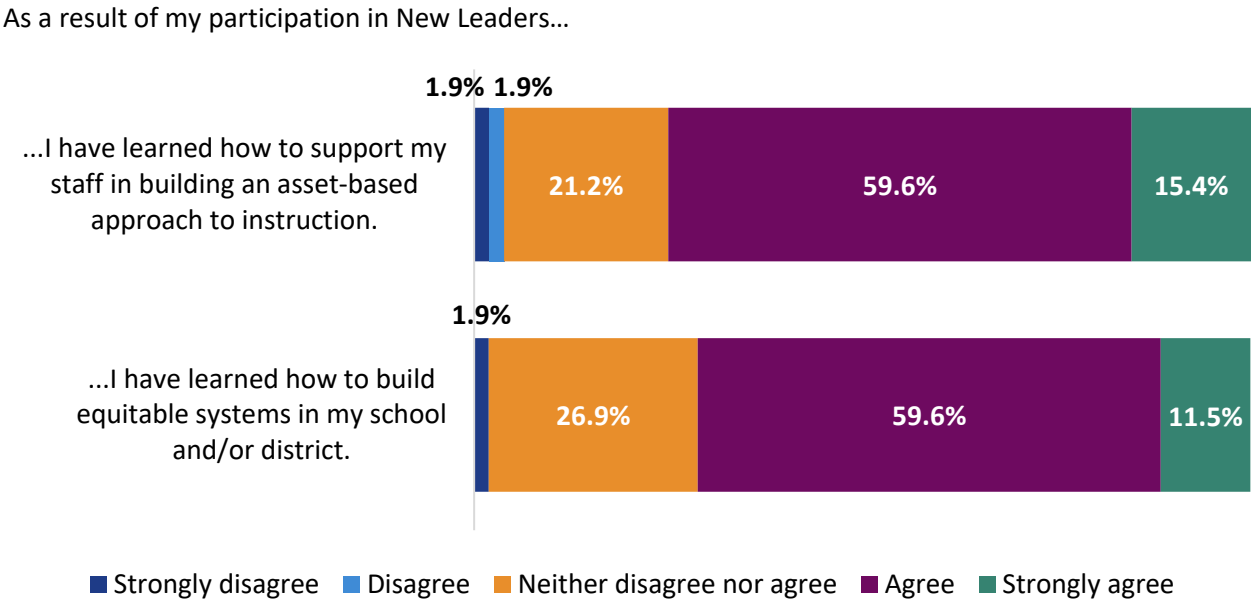
According to survey results, many school leaders developed knowledge, skills, and confidence in several key areas as a result of their New Leaders programming. Specifically, over three-quarters (77.0%) of leaders agreed or strongly agreed that **they felt more confident in their ability to support their staff with new strategies and techniques to improve student achievement outcomes.** A similar percentage (76.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had acquired tools and strategies that improved their ability to address challenges their school faced during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, while nearly two-thirds (61.6%) expressed agreement that their ability to use data to inform instructional practices improved (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Changes in Knowledge, Skills, and Confidence (N=52)



Most surveyed school leaders expressed that their participation in New Leaders had a positive impact on their learning related to **building equitable systems and supporting an asset-based approach to instruction**. Specifically, three-quarters (75.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that through their participation in New Leaders, they learned how to support their staff in building an asset-based approach to instruction. A similar percentage (71.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that they learned how to build equitable systems in their school and/or district (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Knowledge of Building Equitable Systems and Supporting Asset-Based Instruction (N=52)



Another series of survey questions sought to better understand the impact of New Leaders on the development of leadership skills. Participants were presented with a list of ten skill areas and examples of each (see Appendix B for examples), and asked to rate the extent to which their skills in each area improved as a result of their New Leaders programming using a 5-point scale (i.e., 1=Not at all; 2=A little; 3=Somewhat; 4=A large extent; 5=A very large extent). Table 5 displays the average extent of improvement experienced by school leaders in each area. Notably, **promising skill improvement outcomes are seen in all ten areas,** with average ratings falling between 3.5 and 4 for each (i.e., on average, skill improvement ranged from 'somewhat improved' to 'a large extent improved'). **The skill area that participants experienced the most growth in was the Diagnose, Prioritize, and Action Plan area**, which achieved an average rating of 4 (indicating a large extent of skill improvement, on average).

Table 5. Average Extent of Improvement from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (A large extent) in Skill Areas (N=52)

Skill Area	Average Improvement Rating
1. Diagnose, prioritize, and action plan	4.0
2. Reflect on personal and equity-focused leadership	3.9
3. Vision setting	3.9

Skill Area	Average Improvement Rating
4. Establish an effective, higher performing, collaborative team(s)	3.7
5. Analyze various forms of data to prioritize, plan, monitor, and adjust	3.7
6. Develop and cultivate well-aligned teams	3.7
7. Observe, provide effective feedback, and coach	3.7
8. Assess the quality of planning and delivery of instruction	3.6
9. Build and strengthen partnerships	3.6
10. Create culturally responsive instructional systems	3.5

Findings from focus groups and interviews reinforce and expand on the survey findings shared above. According to focus groups and interviews, the New Leaders program equipped participants with a wide range of tools and strategies that enhanced their leadership capacity. One area of learning that was emphasized by most interview and focus group participants was related to action planning, which aligns with survey findings showing skill growth in the Diagnose, Prioritize, and Action Plan area. School leaders **consistently highlighted action planning as one of the most impactful skills they developed through New Leaders**, sharing that it provided them with a structured approach to addressing school improvement goals and team initiatives. Further, action planning frameworks enabled school leaders to create systems that could endure beyond their tenure, as the following quote demonstrates.

> *"I built a leadership team based on what I learned in New Leaders. I used the action plan templates and strategies, and the guidelines for facilitating a leadership team–all of which came from the New Leaders resources. It's a big thing for our little school. There have been leadership teams in the past, but there has been turnover, and things haven't been able to be solidified. This has provided a framework that can continue beyond me."*

Another area of learning that was highly valued by focus group and interview participants relates to data analysis. Participants shared that they **gained skills in data analysis, allowing them to better understand student outcomes**, identify equity gaps,

and create targeted improvement strategies. Some school leaders stated that they had learned to develop protocols to analyze data more effectively and drive instructional changes, while one shared that they appreciated the opportunity to learn to better understand data through an equity lens, focusing on underserved student populations.

Several other participants discussed additional ways in which they learned how to apply an **equity lens to their work**, which helped them critically evaluate their schools' practices and implement strategies to promote equitable access and inclusion. Also emphasized by focus group and interview participants was the value of learning strategies to **promote team accountability**. One participant said that the team accountability focus was "pivotal" to their development as a leader, and another shared that it was not their strong suite, but that New Leaders had given them new tools to help increase team accountability.

Another theme that came out of focus groups and interviews was their appreciation for learning more about **coaching frameworks that they could apply with teachers**. Participants appreciated the coaching resources, and also saw the coaching they received from New Leaders as a model that they could apply to their work. Several school leaders shared ways in which they have changed their school's approach to observation and coaching as a result of their New Leaders programming, including those quoted below.

> *"Something that I've really developed with New Leaders this year are learning walks, where teachers go around and observe each other teach. We've been working on a model where teachers will identify [with their coach] areas that they want to work on, and their peers will use learning walks to intentionally observe and later provide feedback to help them with those specific goals."*

> *"The coaching frameworks [New Leaders] provided have helped hone my own coaching practices and the way that I ask questions… The coaching protocols were provided, and the modeling that [my New Leaders coach] did around that was super helpful."*

Additionally, interview and focus group participants noted that the tools and strategies taught by New Leaders overlap and can be used by school leaders to create more **wholistic and sustainable systems**. Several school leaders commented on the benefits of this interconnected approach, as illustrated in the following quotes.

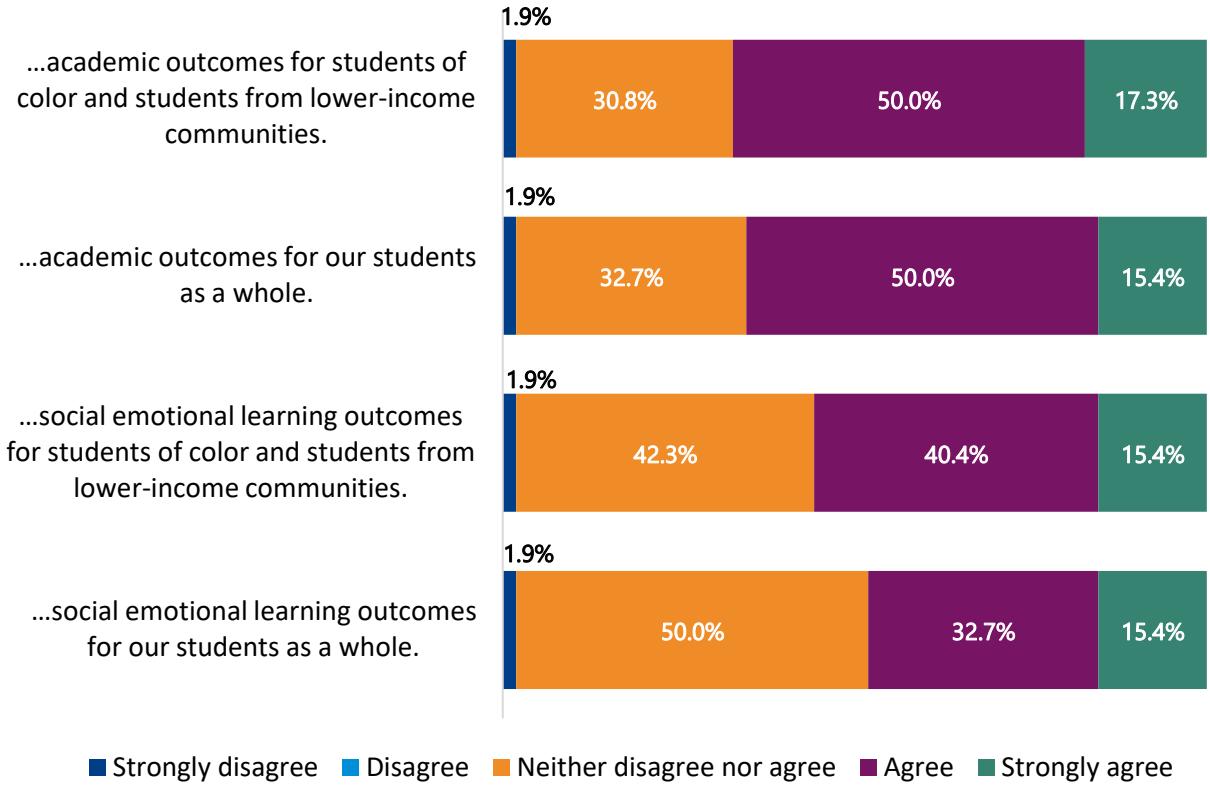
"All of it was very connected. As a leader, you could see the through line connecting everything from your professional development to your survey data; all of it. I appreciate the delivery of those things to help us see the connectedness in our leadership versus separate one-off topics."

"The tools for building an equity lens were really helpful for our leadership team while we were doing the data protocol and action planning."

Not only did school leaders gain important knowledge and skills through their New Leaders participation, according to many survey participants the application of what they learned has the potential to impact student outcomes. Findings shared in Figure 6 suggest that the knowledge and skills gained by the majority of school leaders through their New Leaders participation **positively influenced their ability to enhance academic outcomes for students.** Approximately two-thirds (65.4%) of surveyed school leaders reported learning new strategies and techniques to improve academic outcomes for all students, including students of color and those from lower-income communities (67.3%). While many school leaders also indicated gains in strategies to improve social-emotional learning outcomes for students, the relatively lower percentage of agreement (see Figure 6) highlights an opportunity for New Leaders to further support participants' learning in this area.

Figure 6. Changes in Ability to Help Improve Student Outcomes (N=52)

As a result of my participation in New Leaders programming, I have learned new strategies and techniques to help me and my staff improve…



LEVEL 3: Organizational Support and Change

What resources or supports did districts provide for school leaders engaging in New Leaders training?

In focus groups and interviews, school leaders (N=11) discussed the ways in which their districts had supported their participation in New Leaders. Having time set aside to engage in New Leaders emerged as the most frequently mentioned and essential support for successful program engagement. Several principals who took part in interviews and focus groups highlighted the importance of having dedicated, uninterrupted time to focus on their New Leaders programming. Specifically, participants found it valuable when they had district support to explicitly carve out time to participate in New Leaders activities, as the following quotes demonstrate.

"My supervisor knew when my New Leaders sessions were and when my weekly coaching meeting was, and did not expect me to be available for anything else. That consistency was huge."

"They let me do it during the workday, which was great. It didn't feel like something I had to do on my own time."

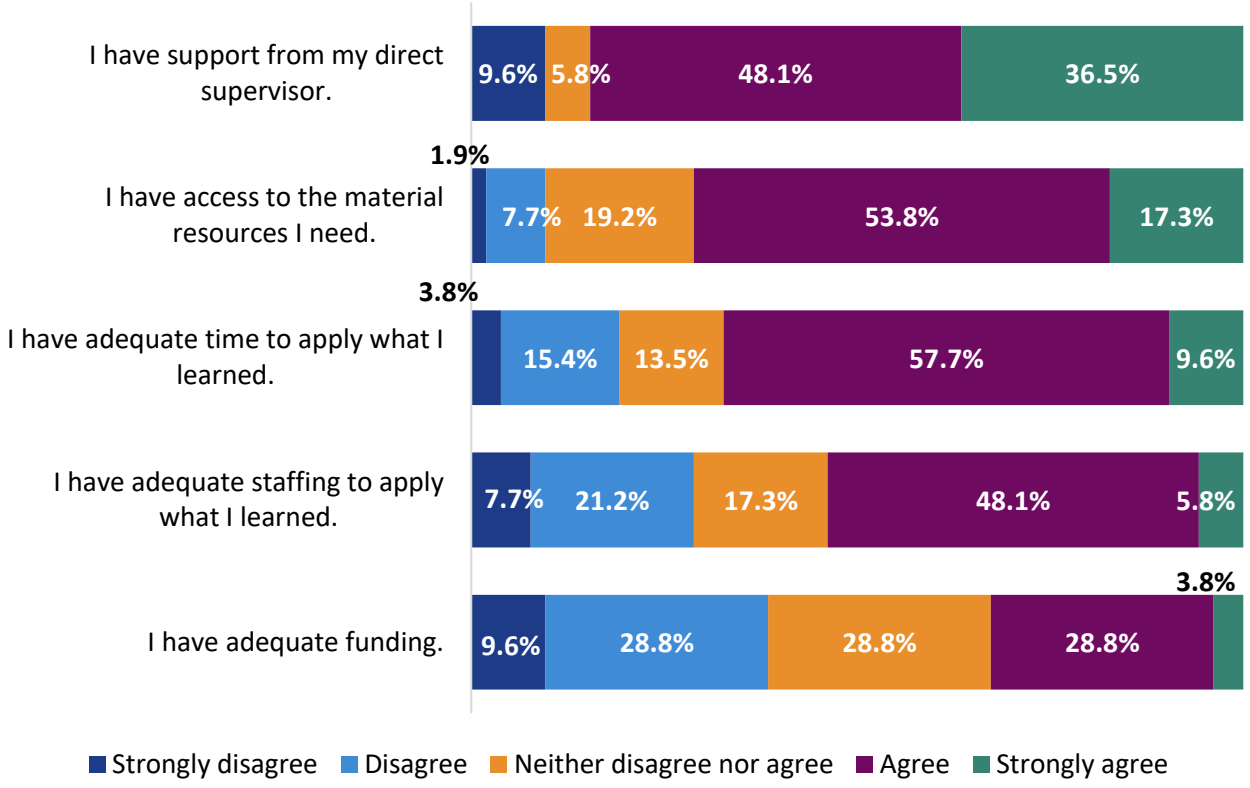
Several school leaders' comments related to timing considerations also touched on scheduling considerations. One participant shared that they were able to stay home on days that they met with New Leaders virtually, noting that "trying to do it at school didn't work because I was interrupted all day." Another participant (quoted below) indicated that they wished they would have had a more private space to take part in their coaching sessions, reinforcing the need for privacy as well as uninterrupted time for fully engaging in the New Leaders program.

"I sometimes had to go to my car to have open and honest conversations."

Surveyed school leaders also shared their perspectives on the resources and support they received from their districts while participating in the New Leaders training (see Figure 7). A large majority (84.6%) reported feeling supported by their direct supervisors, highlighting the importance of strong leadership relationships in enabling professional growth. Many leaders (71.1%) felt they had access to the necessary material resources to implement their learning effectively, while slightly fewer (67.3%) agreed they had adequate time to apply the skills and strategies they gained.

However, survey results reveal challenges in some areas. Only about half (53.9%) of respondents agreed that they had sufficient staffing to put their new knowledge into practice, and **just under one-third (32.6%) reported having adequate funding** to support their efforts. While these findings are, in part, an indication of the supports that school leaders received from their districts, they also shed light on common barriers that limited school leaders' ability to fully apply what they gain from New Leaders professional development into their work, particularly: staffing and funding. As such, overlap exists between the barriers discussed in this section and the barriers to implementation that are further discussed in the Level 4 findings section, starting on page 38.

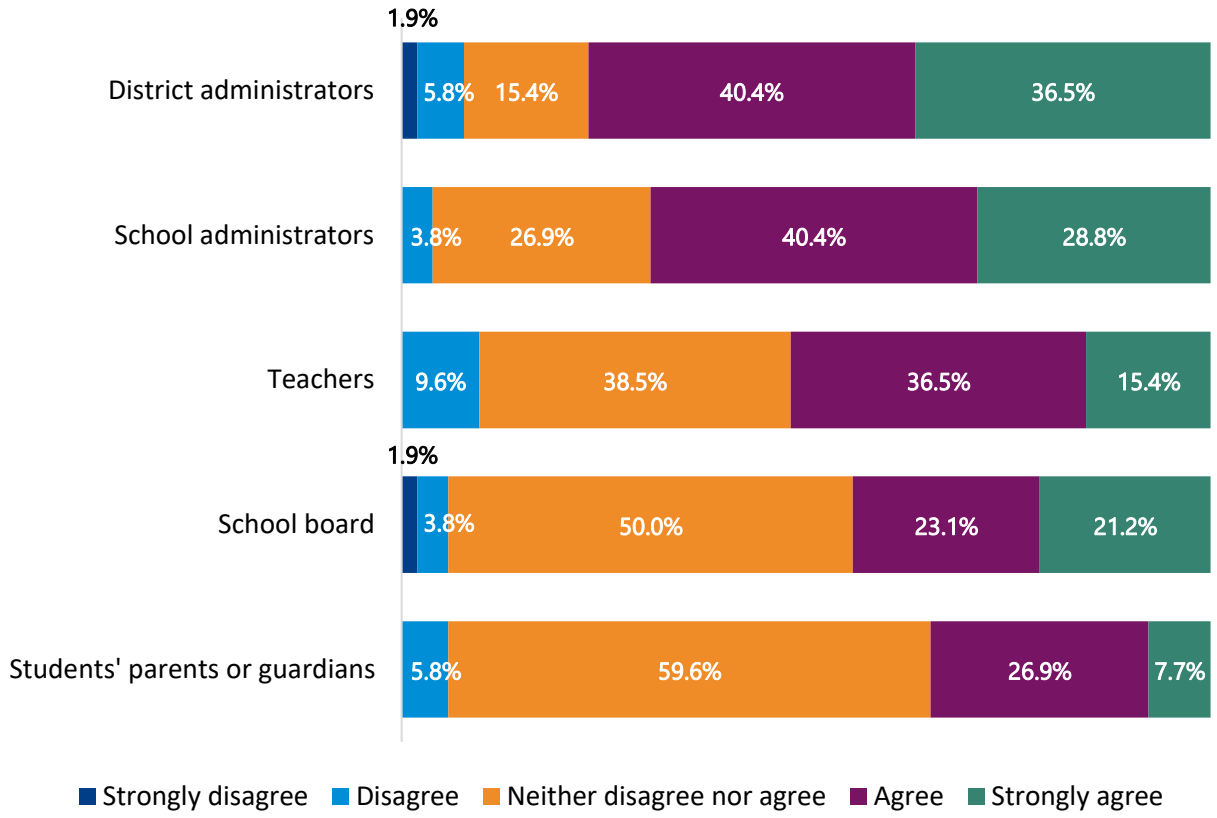
Figure 7. Perceptions of Resources and Supports (N=52)



Is there buy-in across schools and districts into the New Leaders program?

Surveyed school leaders perceived varying levels of buy-in from relevant groups as they implemented what they learned from New Leaders. As shown in Figure 8, school leaders mostly agreed or strongly agreed that there was buy-in from district administrators (76.9%) and school administrators (69.2%) when it came to putting into practice what they had learned through New Leaders. Buy-in was perceived to be more neutral among school boards and students' parents or guardians, while teachers were perceived to be somewhat less bought in compared to other interest holding groups.

Figure 8. Perceived Buy-In by Interest Holders to the New Leaders Program (N=52)



During focus groups and interviews, several participants mentioned that their New Leaders coaching had helped them to address the resistance they encountered and encouraged greater buy-in, particularly from teaching staff, when implementing new initiatives or shifting away from their school's traditional practices. Further, engaging school teams in distributed leadership practices helped some principals to promote greater buy-in. These themes are reflected in the following statements from three interviewed school principals.

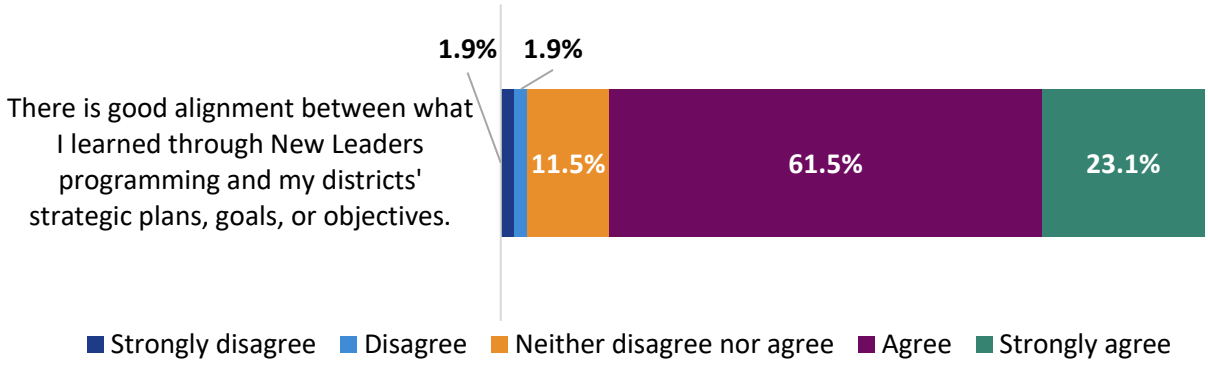
> *"Using the action planning protocol and walking the team through it with data helped build trust in the vision we were pushing for."*

> *"The coaching helped me address the barriers in a way that wasn't confrontational, so we could work through them together rather than it feeling forced."*

"The staff who were resistant had been there for over 10 years and were tied to old practices. But, involving them in the planning helped them feel included and less resistant."

Overall, school leaders shared in interviews and focus groups that they perceived a high level of alignment between the strategic objectives of their districts and the New Leaders programming, consistently describing the program as instrumental in helping them develop their leadership practices in ways that reflected their districts' goals. This sentiment is echoed in survey results, which revealed that a large majority (84.6%) of school leaders agreed or strongly agreed that there is good alignment between what they learned through New Leaders programming and their district's strategic plans, goals, or objectives (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Perceived Alignment between District Strategies and New Leaders



LEVEL 4: Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills

To what extent did school leaders change their leadership practices based on New Leaders programming?

In the online survey, school leaders were asked to rate the extent to which various aspects of their personal leadership practices improved due to New Leaders programming using a 5-point scale (i.e., 1=Not at all; 2=A little; 3=Somewhat; 4=A large extent; 5=A very large extent). Participants were asked to consider five aspects of their leadership practices (listed in Table 6) and were provided with accompanying examples for each areas (see Appendix C). The majority of surveyed school leaders indicated improvement across all five aspects of their leadership practices as a result of their

participation in New Leaders; **average ratings suggest that participants experienced close to a large extent of improvement in all leadership areas**. Interpersonal leadership practices, Resilient leadership practices, and Adaptive leadership practices stand out as the areas where improvements were the most pronounced.

Table 6. Average Extent of Improvement from 1 (Not At all) to 5 (A very large extent) in Aspects of Leadership Practices (N=52)

Leadership Area	Average Improvement Rating
1. Interpersonal leadership practices	4.0
2. Resilient leadership practices	3.9
3. Adaptive leadership practices	3.9
4. Equity-focused leadership practices	3.7
5. Belief-based and goal-driven leadership practices	3.7

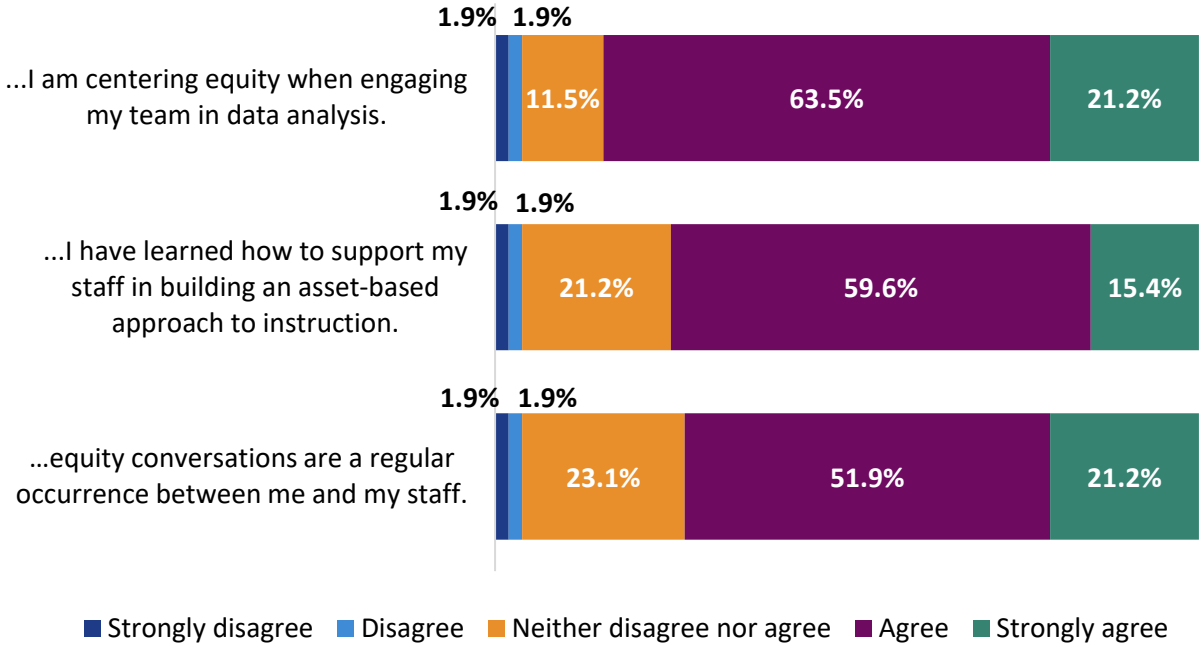
In open-ended survey responses, school leaders provided additional feedback about how their leadership practices evolved based on their participation in New Leaders training (N=35; Table 7). School leaders most commonly reported making **positive changes or adjustments to their communication and collaborative practices** (n=16). Leaders shared examples of creating opportunities for others to communicate and be heard, such as ensuring equitable participation from all staff in meetings, establishing rules for respectful disagreement among staff, and instituting listening sessions among staff and students. Some leaders reported that they changed their practices around active listening, being open and transparent, and considering multiple perspectives. These findings align with the results shared in Table 6 (above), showing strong growth in the area of Interpersonal leadership practices. Other themes from survey responses that stand out in regard to changes that school leaders made based on what they learned in New Leaders appear in Table 7 as well, and include team building, changes instructional leadership practices, approaches to leadership in general, and practices related to equity-focused leadership.

Table 7. Changes in Leadership Practices Resulting from New Leaders

Theme	#	Representative Quotes
Interpersonal communication and collaboration	18	*"One of the biggest changes has been around interpersonal skills. I tend to be an early implementer. I learned how to step back and to meet staff where they are and support them along the way."* *"I now work through problems with an asset-based mindset and seek more feedback from different stakeholders. As a result, our school culture has begun to shift positively."* *"We created a student advisory panel made up of diverse students."*
Team building	13	*"We have created a Leadership team. I am using all the tools provided by New Leaders on the online learning hub. They have given me the confidence to lead a team. Without the training and solid guidance from New Leaders, I don't think I would have been able to begin such an endeavor so soon."*
General leadership	12	*"I am a more empowered leader that better understands I am not in this alone. The result has been me empowering my teachers more."* *"One thing I've begun is giving myself a little more grace and leaning on others for support, which I used to see as a negative thing."*
Equity-focused leadership	8	*"I am more aware of the bias that my lived experiences bring and how I can be more open to new learning by listening and asking different questions."* *"Our new anti-hate and bias protocols are an important example of this work at our school."*
Instructional leadership	6	*"My New Leaders coaching helped me have hard conversations with staff, helped me translate data into action, and helped me to create goals to support better Tier 1 Literacy Instruction."*

Surveyed school leaders rated the impact of New Leaders programming on incorporating equity and asset-based approaches to instruction into their practice. When considering the percentages of leaders who agreed or strongly agreed with the survey prompts, a large majority (84.7%) of leaders indicated that they are centering equity when engaging their team in data analysis. Additionally, approximately three-quarters of leaders indicated they have learned how to better support their staff in building an asset-based approach to instruction (75.0%) and that equity conversations are a regular occurrence between them and their staff (73.1%; see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Incorporating Equity and an Asset-Based Approach to Instruction into Practice (N=52)



In focus groups and interviews, eleven school leaders shared their perspectives on how New Leaders impacted their leadership practices, and in particular, their approach to supporting historically underserved student groups. Several school leaders noted that the changes that they made were inspired not only by New Leaders, but by multiple synergistic tools as well as their desire to better support their staff, students, and school communities. However, those participants shared that their **New Leaders experiences aligned well with and strengthened their efforts to instigate positive changes,** including those that came from other sources or out of their personal work and collaboration with

their teams. Their responses also provide reinforcing evidence that, through New Leaders, they experienced meaningful shifts in their mindset and practices.

One theme that stands out from focus groups and interviews is the change that participants made in terms of their data-driven practices. As the following two quotes demonstrate, school leaders used data to improve tiered interventions and to better understand the experiences of historically underserved students.

> *"We spend more time now with the data to identify what students are missing and target support more effectively."*

> *"It was really important for our teachers, many of whom are tribal members, to look at data while also considering tribal values and traditional teachings."*

Focus group and interview participants also commonly noted that they adopted action planning and distributed leadership models that they learned through their New Leaders participation, and several participants described forming or strengthening leadership teams. These changes have resulted in building more shared accountability and teacher confidence, as the following comments illustrate.

> *"Distributed leadership has been transformative... Teachers are leading projects and taking ownership. Three of them even presented to our school board."*

> *"When teachers are part of the decision-making process, they're more confident and feel like we're all in this together."*

Echoing findings from the survey shared in Figure 10, school leaders highlighted in focus groups and interviews the ways in which New Leaders helped them sharpen their focus on equity. Several school leaders expressed a shift in their own mindset around how students' cultural identities and experiences shape their learning. Some leaders, such as the one quoted below, helped their school implement changes to make their curriculum and practices more culturally responsive.

> *"Our students now see their culture in the curriculum and on the walls. Before, they couldn't see themselves in the system."*

Another theme that emerged from focus groups and interviews related to the positive changes that school leaders made to enhance communication and build relationships across the school community, including with staff, students and families. Some school leaders expressed that **they were able to make challenging conversations with their staff more productive**, in part thanks to the guidance of their New Leaders coaching. The comments below demonstrate some of the ways that school leaders shared that they shifted their approaches to enhance communication and relations in their school communities.

> *"Instead of calling out a teacher for not doing enough, I focused on rapport and support. This has changed how I approach situations, and especially conflict."*

> *"Students and families now feel like they belong because we've intentionally created spaces where their perspectives are heard."*

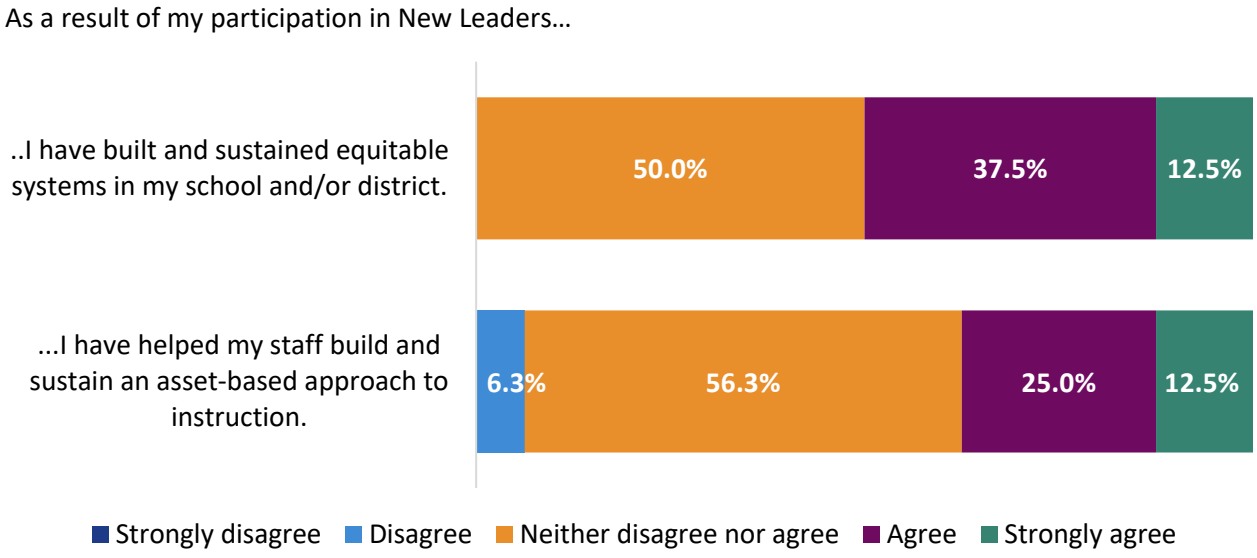
Finally, several leaders shared in focus groups and interviews unique ways that they have implemented changes to support their students' and schools' success, and the value of their experience with New Leaders in implementing these changes. **There appears to be a cascading effect, in that changes made as a more direct result of working with New Leaders have led to multiple other positive changes.** Several school leaders who formed distributed leadership teams using the tools and resources provided by New Leaders shared how those teams worked together to implement innovative projects and approaches. For example, one school's leadership team is implementing student-led "passion projects" that intend to inspire students to take a more active role in their own learning and to pursue their interests. Another school has created a non-punitive calming space for students to go when they, or their teacher, felt that they could benefit from taking a break from the classroom. While this idea did not come from New Leaders, the principal shared that they saw many connections between their New Leaders learnings and how they were approaching and implementing school improvements.

To what extent do leadership practice changes sustain over time?

Surveyed school leaders who had already completed their New Leaders participation (N=16) were asked to reflect on how their leadership practices have evolved and been sustained over time, particularly in relation to incorporating equity and building an

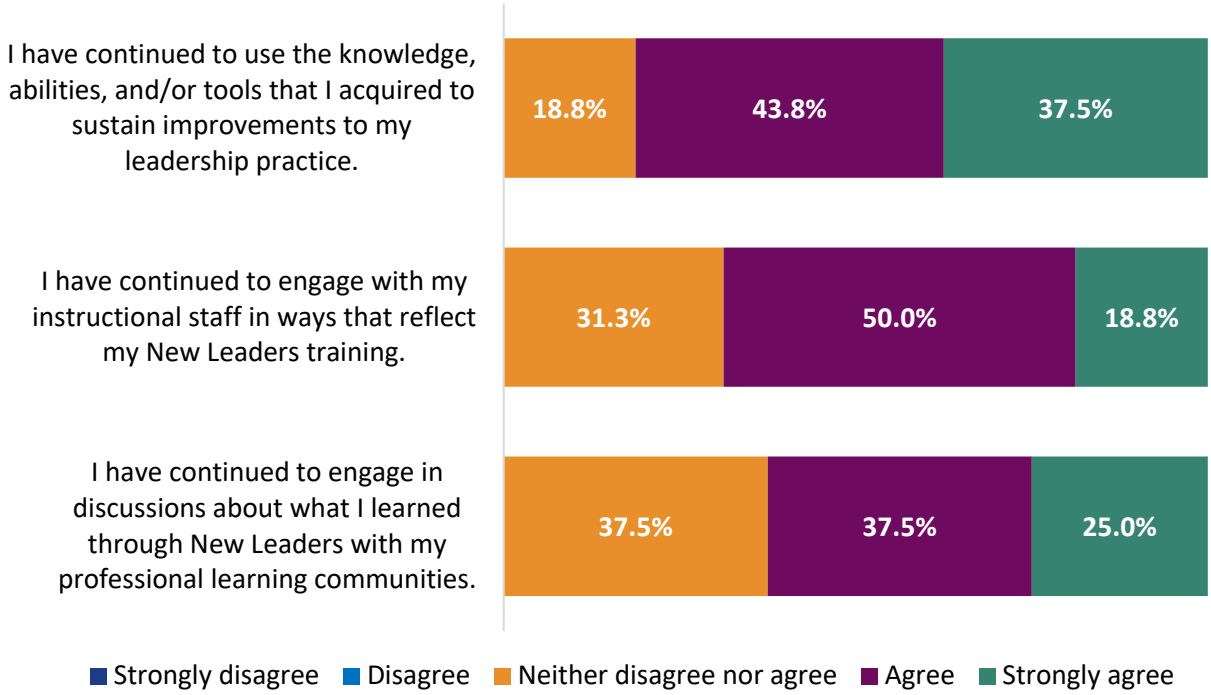
asset-based approach to instruction. Half of those surveyed (50.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that participating in New Leaders had impacted their ability to establish and maintain equitable systems within their schools or districts. Additionally, about one-third (32.5%) of past New Leaders participants (N=16) felt that, as a result of their participation, they had helped their staff in adopting and sustaining an asset-based approach to instruction (see Figure 11). These responses reveal both the progress made and the ongoing need to further embed these transformative practices within educational systems.

Figure 11. Sustaining Changes in Leadership Practices – Past Participants Only (N=16)



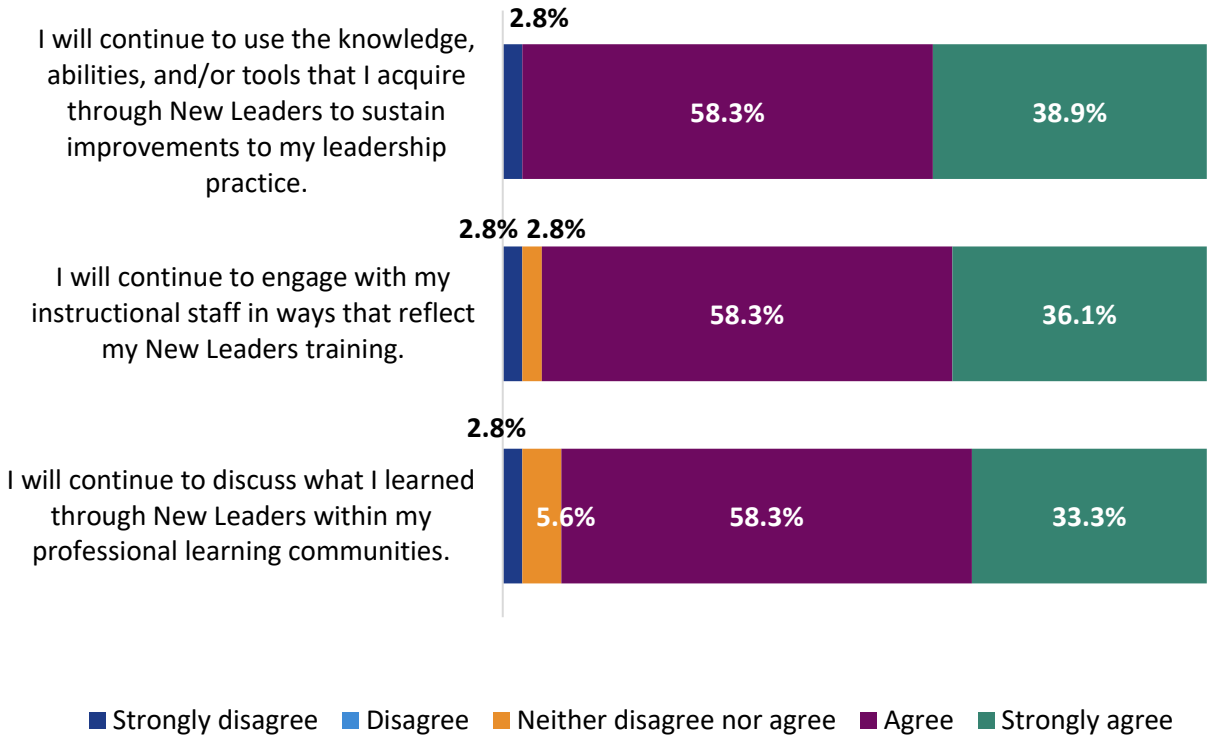
When past New Leaders participants (N=16) were asked about sustaining changes in their leadership practice, a large majority (81.3%) of these leaders agreed or strongly agreed that they have **continued to use the knowledge, abilities, and/or tools they acquired** to sustain improvements in their leadership practice (Figure 12). Further, a strong majority of past participants agreed or strongly agreed that they have continued to engage with their instructional staff in ways that reflect their New Leaders training (68.8%), and nearly two-thirds indicated that they continue to discuss what they learned through New Leaders within their professional learning communities (PLCs; 62.5%). Together, these are promising results suggesting that participation in New Leaders has a lasting impact on leadership practices.

Figure 12. Sustaining changes in leadership practices – Past participants only (N=16)



Current New Leaders participants (N=36) shared in their survey responses a strong commitment to sustaining the changes they have made in their leadership practices. Nearly all respondents (97.2%) expressed agreement that they will continue using the knowledge, abilities, and tools gained through New Leaders to drive ongoing improvements in their leadership practices. This overwhelming agreement indicates that participants perceive a high level of practical value in what they are learning in New Leaders as it applies to their daily leadership work. Similarly, a substantial majority (over 90%) affirmed their intention to continue engaging with their instructional staff and PLCs in ways that reflect their New Leaders training. Together, these findings (displayed in Figure 13) illustrate not only the appreciation of school leaders for what they are learning through New Leaders, but also their readiness to integrate key elements into their long-term leadership strategies.

Figure 13. Sustaining changes in leadership practices – Current participants only (N=36)



Under which conditions and/or supports were school leaders best able to achieve changes in their leadership practices based on New Leaders programming?

School leaders who took part in interviews and focus groups (N=11) shared several key factors that they felt were instrumental in helping them to achieve positive outcomes from their New Leaders participation. First, New Leaders coaching was widely praised, with participants viewing it as a critical driver of their personal and professional growth. While participants acknowledged that it can be challenging to make time in busy schedules for coaching sessions, they echoed the benefits that they saw in doing so, as reflected in the following comment.

> *"The hour-long coaching sessions are an investment. Each one saved me two to three hours of work, because I got clarity on where I'm going now, and have the plan mapped out. I'd feel more confident, and like I have the skills and disposition to move forward."*

Further, when asked what advice they would give to other school leaders to help them get the most out of their New Leaders experience, the most common refrain (illustrated in the following quotes) from focus group and interview participants was to take full advantage of the coaching sessions.

> *"Meet with your coach. Be honest, be open. Don't be afraid to talk about race, to talk about equity… Nothing's going to change if we don't talk about it."*

> *"I suggest having regularly scheduled coaching sessions so that it's not two months before you meet again, but it's on a regular basis. For me, every three to four weeks is a good flow. That said, there were times where [my coach and I] we met twice in two weeks because it was needed, and I was really grateful for it."*

Several focus group and interview participants said that they were encouraged to share what they had learned through New Leaders with their PLCs, and that doing so helped them more thoroughly understand the materials and how they could be applied. This suggests that **districts that encouraged participants to share insights with their peers helped to enhance the program's impact.** One participant shared the following experience about disseminating their learning to colleagues.

> *"During meetings with principals in my district who weren't in New Leaders, they asked me to recap the things that I was learning from participating. That was very helpful to have my colleagues know what I was doing in New Leaders, and then to be interested in how that could impact the rest of our work."*

Finally, a few interviewed principals shared the importance of the support that they received in terms of **backup and substitute support of their job duties**. This support was critical for principals when it came to attending New Leaders sessions, doing related activities such as peer observation, and also when additional time was needed to implement or apply new concepts to their work. However, this type of support was not universally received by principals. This presented a barrier to implementation for those school leaders who did receive backup support in their job duties, as the following section highlights.

What barriers did participants perceive in transferring learning from their New Leaders programming to their leadership practices?

Note that some overlap exists in the themes that emerged related to barriers discussed in this section and those discussed in the Level 3 findings section on resources and support, starting on page 24.

Several interview and focus group participants made comments suggesting that additional substitute or backup support would have made it easier for them to translate their New Leaders learning into practice. The comment that follows underscores the frustration shared by overburdened principals.

> *"We're constantly busy, constantly on the go. If someone wants me to do more, then they maybe should send a sub out so that I would have time to do more of the things that need to happen."*

Other participants in focus groups and interviews shared that they at times struggled to focus on long-term strategic initiatives amidst daily operational demands. Further, some participants found it difficult to navigate the tension between taking time for thoughtful planning and the desire to show immediate results. These themes are reflected in the following statements made by two principals.

> *"Time is always going to be a battle. Taking a step back to plan could save us in the long run, but it's hard to get buy-in for that process."*

> *"I don't want to spend time figuring out how we can be equitable—I want us to be equitable. But it takes time, and you have to keep working at it."*

Several interviewed principals also noted that they encountered some resistance from staff when it came to implementing strategies related to distributed leadership. Some of the resistance, they noted, may be a reluctance on the part of teachers to take on more responsibilities due to their already heavy workload. One principal shared that they have "really strong teachers," but that "getting them to step into leadership roles has been hard." One principal shared that they encountered some resistance to change from teachers who didn't see any problem with the school's outcomes, but perhaps weren't looking at those outcomes through an equity lens. Their quote highlights the

importance of dissecting data to better understand issues for underserved student groups, a strategy they went on to say their school has begun to embrace.

> *"We're a pretty happy school. We have really good test scores. I think it's hard if people don't feel like there's a problem. But if you're a person of color, there might be a problem."*

One principal shared that as a new principal and new to their community, it was at first challenging for them to develop buy-in among their staff. Initially, this resulted in strained relations with their school staff, who felt it was their responsibility to tell the new school leader all of the things they should be doing. However, over time and through the use of resources and strategies learned through New Leaders, this school principal (quoted below) transformed their leadership team into a much higher functioning and collaborative group with a shared vision.

> *"Through New Leaders I worked to develop the leadership team. We used our data protocol. We used our leadership team for decisions on instruction and focused things back on the needs of students versus only focusing on the things that I, as a school leader, should do. It really changed the whole framework of what the leadership team here at the school does."*

Surveyed school leaders also reflected on what resources and support they felt would have enhanced their ability to apply what they learned from New Leaders into their work, shedding light on barriers to implementation (see Table 8). Among those who provided open-ended feedback (N=24), a recurring theme was the need for additional staff or staffing changes, shared by a quarter of respondents (n=6). An equal proportion (n=6) expressed **a desire for ongoing training and guidance from New Leaders, not just for themselves but for others in their districts**. This sentiment was particularly strong among school leaders from the Rural Alliance, who, at the time of the survey, were aware of potential program discontinuation. Despite these barriers, many participants' comments incorporated positive remarks about their New Leaders experience, underscoring its value in their professional journeys. Many responses touched on multiple themes, with a need for more time arising as a common sub-theme throughout.

Table 8. Desired Resources and Supports

Theme	#	Representative Quotes
Staffing needs or adjustments	6	*"The resources given are excellent. I don't always have the manpower/time to put into action certain strategies learned."* *"I suggest a model for principal/administrative staffing where some administrators are focused on operations while others are focused on instructional growth."* *"More time and staff to implement systems."*
Continuing New Leaders	6	*"My biggest ask would be more time with my New Leaders coach. Having coaching for my first year has been a FANTASTIC opportunity; however, I wish I had more time to practice and walk through adjustments, particularly when things that were planned well didn't go as planned. That extra support and sounding board would be invaluable to me."* *"I would like others in leadership roles [at my district] to receive New Leaders or similar programs so that we have a common vocabulary and more accountability."* *"New Leaders may be ending for the Rural Alliance due to lack of funding. It would be a shame if this can't continue due to the price. Educational funding may be a big challenge this next school year."*
Funding needs	4	*"More funding so I can provide learning walks throughout the school day."* *"I would love to acquire funding to do the work I am trying to do. Where do you find the time?"*
Strategic alignment	4	*"Small groups that work together and meet to share practices."* *"Learning walks of other administrators would be very helpful. I would like to see my colleagues work through various problems of practice."*

LEVEL 5: School and Student Outcomes

Do administrators and educators perceive student outcomes were impacted by their school's participation in New Leaders?

School leaders (N=11) shared in interviews and focus groups their observations of how changes they had made to their leadership practices have impacted student outcomes. It is important to note that **many participants expressed that they found it challenging to consider the isolated impact of New Leaders separately from changes that may have resulted from other avenues.** Keeping that caveat in mind, school leaders shared a number of promising student outcomes that they felt were related to changes they or their teams had implemented.

About half (n=6) of the school leaders who took part in focus groups or interviews shared that they perceived recent progress in students' academic outcomes, while the other half (n=5) were more neutral about the student progress they were seeing; **several stated that they were still in the early stages of implementing changes** that they hoped would have an impact on student performance in the future. Among those who perceived changes in student performance, one principal shared that focusing on the Instructional Core (a concept taught in New Leaders programs) and using student data more effectively had resulted in greater student academic success. They went on to share:

> *"We've shifted our instruction to focus on the task and to ensure what we are assigning students is culturally appropriate, and at the right level. We're not perfect, but we've shifted the way we think about not just moving through a curriculum but actually giving students the things that they need to grow. Our test scores are already coming back better. I don't know if it's just a good year, but our test scores look really good."*

Another principal (whose quote follows) commented on the academic success they had seen in their school, attributing it in part to the shared commitment among school educators to support all students with quality instruction; values they noted had been reenforced through New Leaders.

"[New Leaders] has reinforced and put me in community with people who believe all kids can learn, are willing to think creatively about how we give kids access and are not willing to accept no for an answer to, 'Does this kid deserve a quality education?' I think the biggest impact it has had on students is they see adults that believe in them. We had 45 seniors in last year's class. Forty-four graduated. For us, that's a really big deal. I would say for about a quarter of them, it was because of their connection with the adults in the building."

Several interviewed principals noted shifts in students' social-emotional development and behavior. One school principal described how their New Leaders coaching and delegating responsibilities among staff had led to a new behavior intervention program, which has **reduced behavioral incidents and increased time-on-task for students**. Another principal shared that an approach that they found to be synergistic with their New Leaders program was Marzano's[5] model of teaching effectiveness, stating that it had helped them cut their number of suspensions in half. While this didn't come directly from New Leaders, the principal noted that New Leaders was instrumental in helping them set their goals and move forward with focus and intention. Finally, one interviewed principal, who is quoted below, noted the shift they had seen in students' attendance. Again, they mentioned that the changes they had implemented were not solely New Leaders strategies, but that having the New Leaders coaching behind them to "de-layer situations" was extremely helpful.

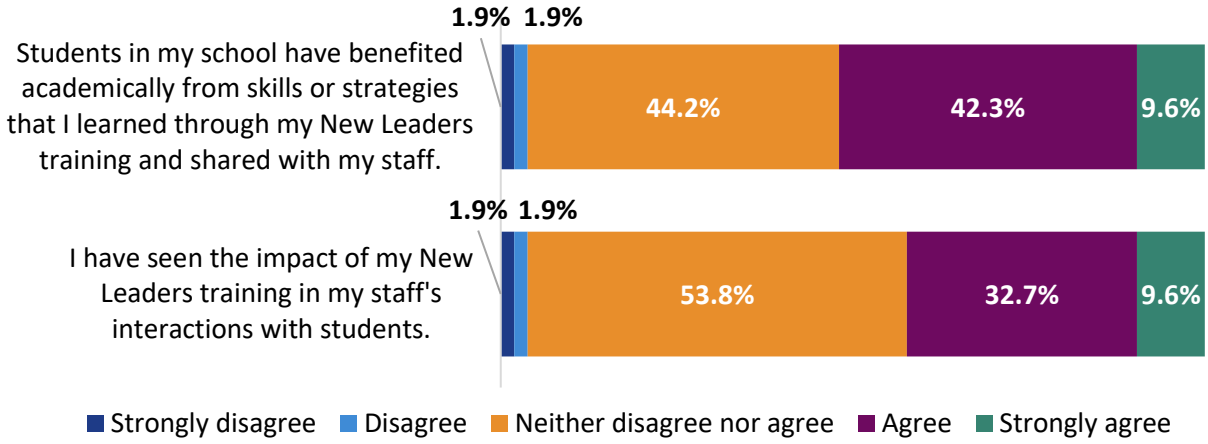
"I have one kid in my mind who was missing 56 days last year and now comes to school regularly. He's had F's, and now he's at A's and B's. He got most improved student of the year. I think it was really cool. I think this is the kind of student outcome that comes out of kids feeling like they are being seen."

Surveyed school leaders (N=52) shared their perspectives on the impact of New Leaders programming on student outcomes at their school. About half (51.9%) agreed that

[5] Marzano, R. (2007). *The art and science of teaching: A comprehensive framework for effective instruction*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

students at their schools had benefited academically from the strategies and skills they applied after participating in New Leaders. Somewhat fewer (42.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that they have seen an impact of their New Leaders training on their staff's interactions with students. The largest proportion of school leaders expressed neither disagreement nor agreement with these statements, as shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Changes in Student Outcomes (N=52)



Does school assessment data provide evidence of successful academic outcomes for students whose schools participated in New Leaders?

Student assessment data was explored to shed light on the potential impact that school leaders' participation in New Leaders had on students' academic achievement within their schools. Academic achievement is assessed by considering the percentage of students who met the state standard for their grade level on the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Student achievement from the 2018-19 school year, before New Leaders began working with school leaders in Washington State, is used as a baseline measurement for Kent School District and schools from the Rural Alliance, who began their New Leaders participation during or before the 2021-22 school year. Vancouver Public Schools began its New Leaders participation in the 2022-23 school year; therefore both the 2018-19 and the 2012-22 school year data can be considered their district's baseline data. Across all groups, data from the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school year are excluded from our analysis due to inconsistencies in data availability for those years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings that follow are organized into subsections comparing student outcomes from Vancouver Public Schools, Kent School District, and the Rural Alliance with student outcomes from methodically selected comparison groups. Comparison groups were matched with treatment groups based on their similarity in terms of the number of students enrolled, and their student achievement on the SBA during the 2018-19 (baseline) school year. Because Vancouver Public Schools and Kent School District provided New Leaders training to all principals in their districts, their student outcomes are examined at the district-level.

Schools from the Rural Alliance that participated in New Leaders are grouped together to form a Rural Alliance treatment school group; this treatment group includes only schools within Rural Alliance whose school leaders participated in New Leaders programming. School leaders from the Rural Alliance varied in terms of when they began participating in New Leaders. Therefore, only those schools whose leadership began participating before or during the 2021-22 school year are included in the data analysis for that year. The later adopters of New Leaders are added to the Rural Alliance treatment school group for the year they began their New Leaders participation. To establish a representative baseline, data from the 2018-19 school year includes *all* Rural Alliance schools (i.e., who began their participation in 2021 or later). The comparison schools used as a control group for the Rural Alliance treatment schools were kept consistent across each year of data comparisons. For a full list of Rural Alliance treatment schools, and the comparison schools and districts included in this study, see Appendix D.

Overall, the findings that follow are inconclusive in terms of the quantifiable evidence they offer around the impact of New Leaders on student outcomes. However, research suggests that there is often a time lag between when professional development occurs and when measurable student outcomes may be observed. [6] This is in alignment with feedback from New Leaders participants, several of whom shared that they were in the early phases of implementing changes at their schools. Further, previous research

[6] Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving Impact Studies of Teachers' Professional Development: Toward Better Conceptualizations and Measures. Educational Researcher, 38(3), 181-199. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08331140

emphasizes the importance of collaborative learning and cohesion as key characteristics of effective professional development in educational settings, which in turn can positively impact student outcomes.[7,8] As evidenced in previous sections of this report, New Leaders has fostered increased collaboration and networking among school leaders and has achieved a high degree of cohesive alignment with partnering districts' strategic goals. Therefore, the potential for New Leaders programming to impact student achievement outcomes over time continues to hold substantial promise.

Vancouver Public Schools

According to available data, Vancouver Public Schools experienced an overall decrease in the percentage of students who met their grade-level standard on both the SBA ELA assessment (Figure 15) and the SBA Math assessment (Figure 16) between the 2018-19 school year and the 2023-24 school year. This decline is similar to the trend in student achievement observed in the control (comparison) school district.

[7] Yoon, K., Duncan, T., Lee, S., Scarloss, B., & Shapley, K. (2007). Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement. Issues & Answers. *Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest* (033).

[8] Garet, M., Porter, A., Desimone, L., Birman, B., & Yoon, K. (2001). What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American educational research journal, 38*(4), 915-945.

Figure 15. Percent of Students At or Above Benchmark on the SBA ELA Assessment - Vancouver

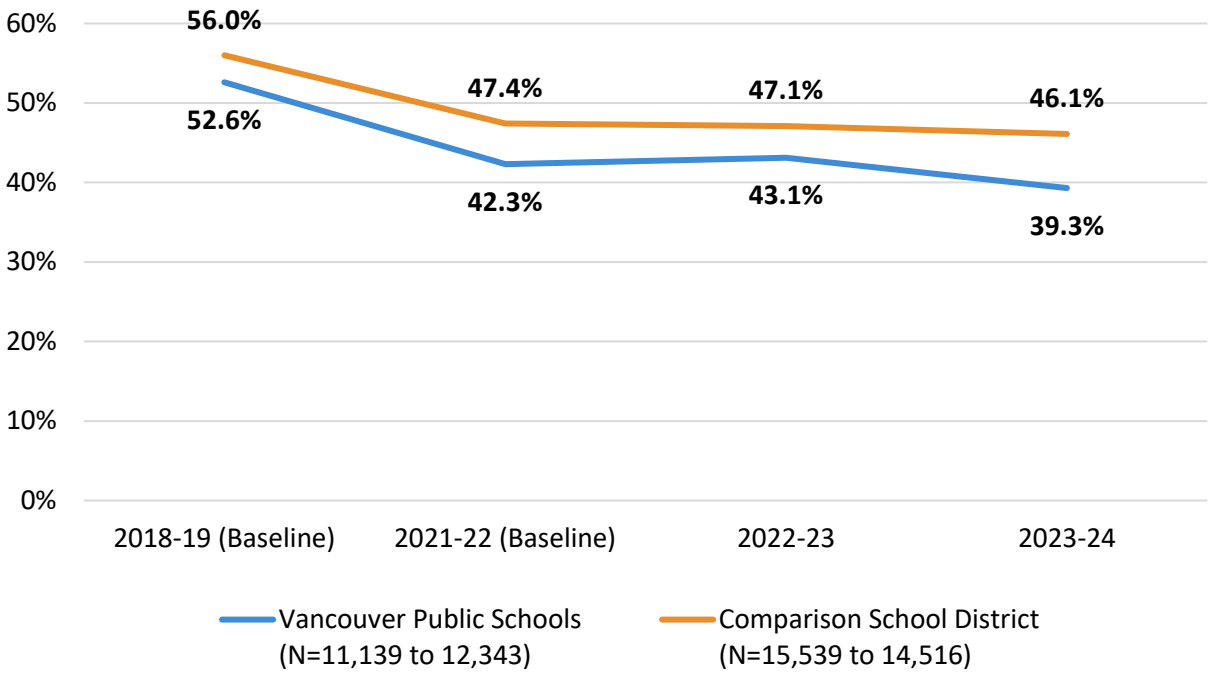
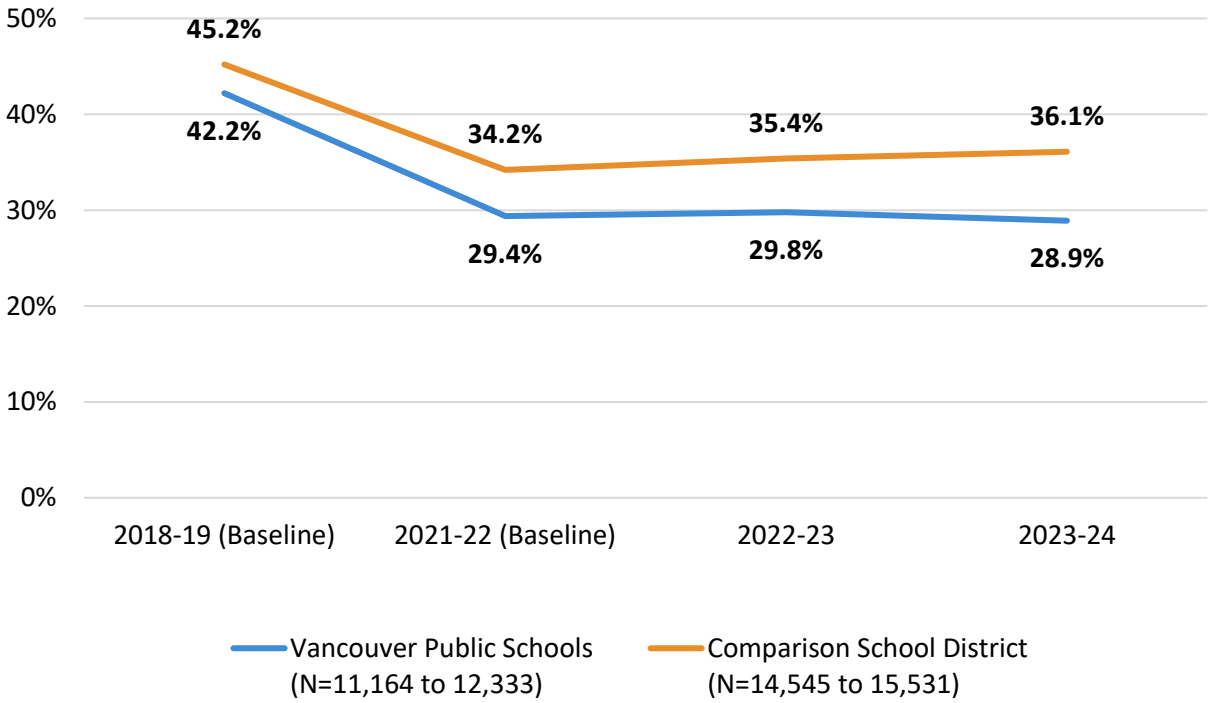


Figure 16. Percent of Students At or Above Benchmark on the SBA Math Assessment - Vancouver



Kent School District

The percentage of Kent School District students who met or exceeded their grade-level standard on both the SBA ELA assessment (Figure 17) and the SBA Math assessment (Figure 18) trended slightly downward between the 2018-19 school year and the 2023-24 school year, with the largest decrease observed between 2019 and 2021 (when COVID-19 hit).

Figure 17. Percent of Students At or Above Benchmark on the SBA ELA Assessment - Kent

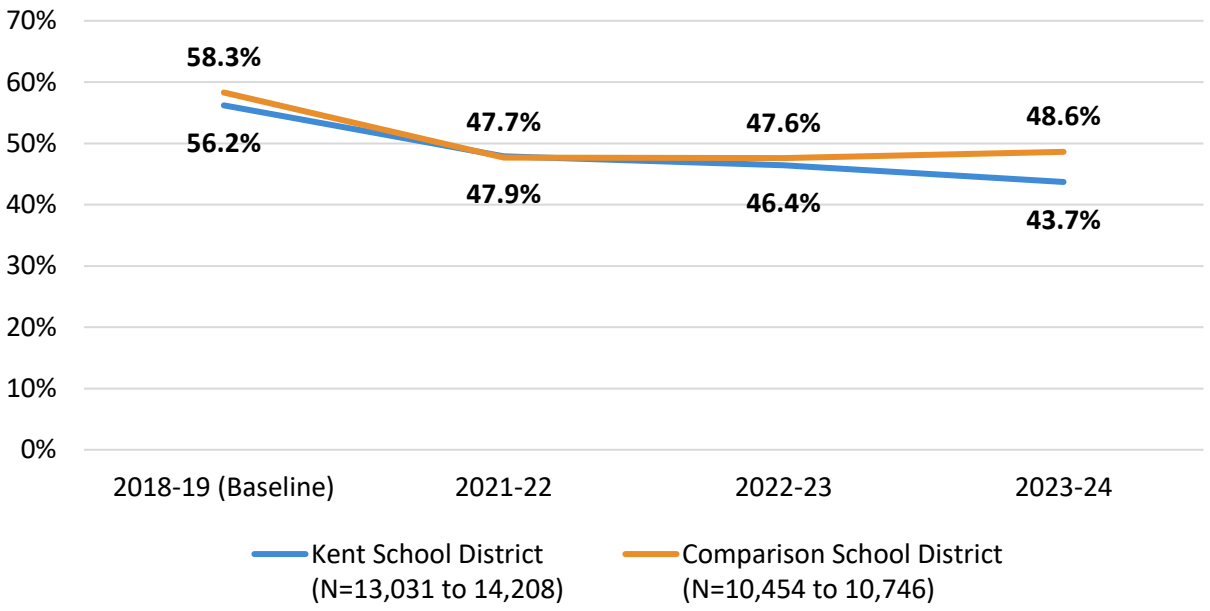
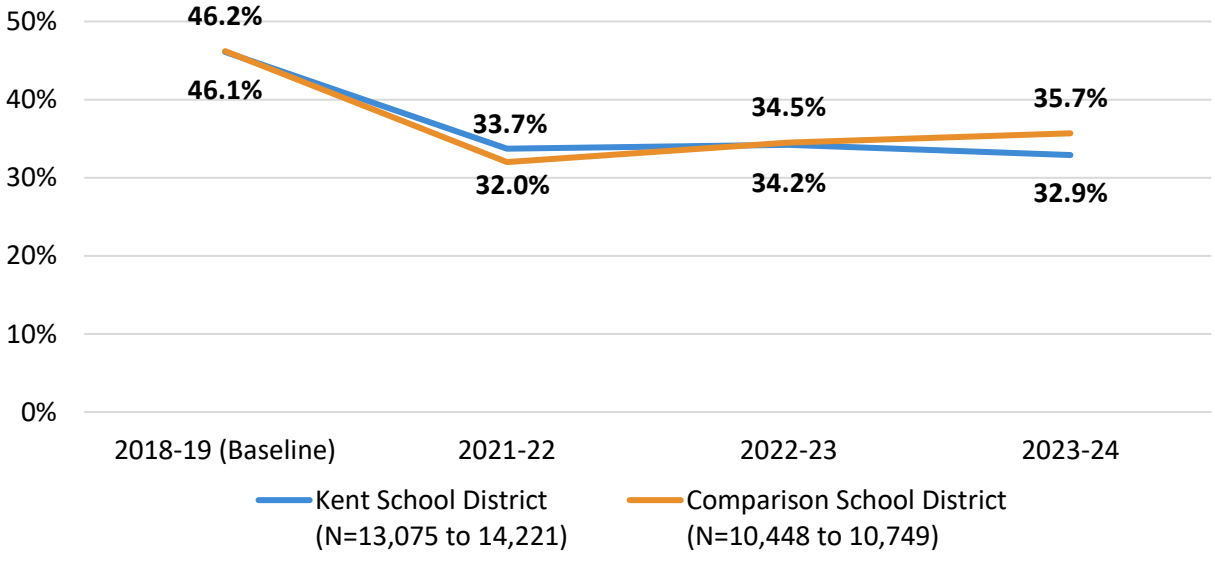


Figure 18. Percent of Students At or Above Benchmark on the SBA Math Assessment – Kent



Rural Alliance

Findings on student assessment outcomes were very similar for schools in the Rural Alliance treatment group and schools in the comparison group. As shown in Figure 19 and 20, both groups dropped about ten points in the percentage of students meeting grade level standards in ELA and Math between the 2018-19 school year and the 2021-22 school year, but have leveled off and remained somewhat stable since.

Figure 19. Percent of Students At or Above Benchmark on the SBA ELA Assessment – Rural Alliance

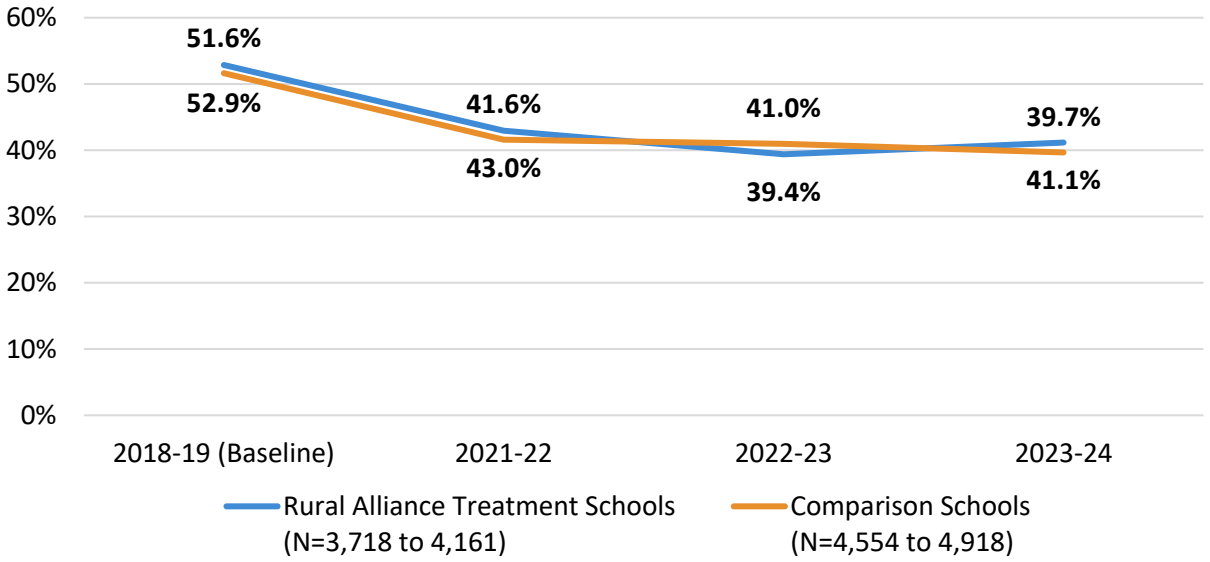
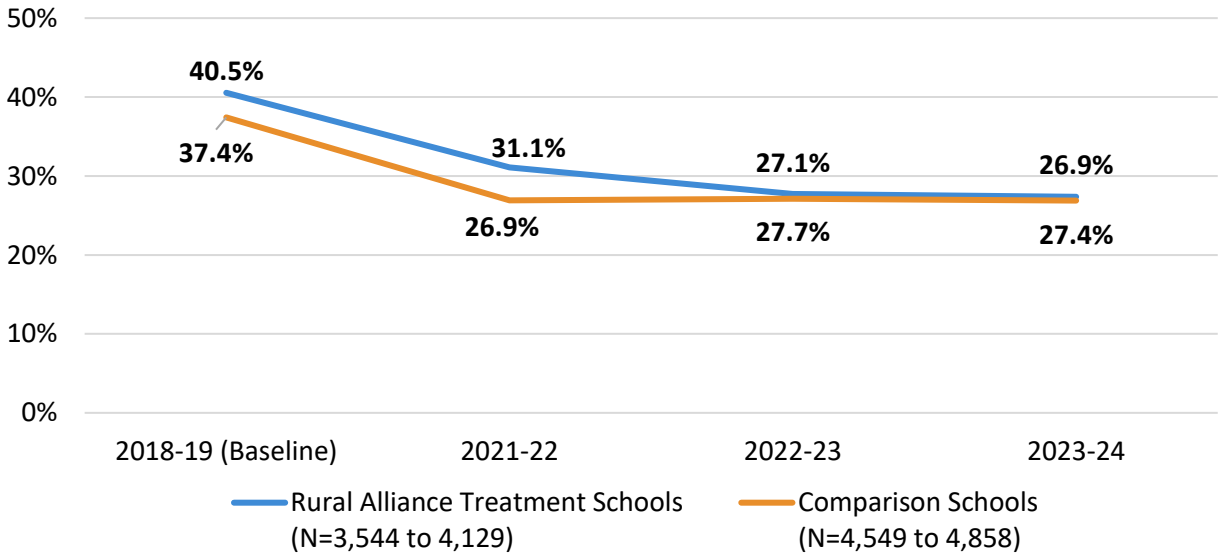


Figure 20. Percent of Students At or Above Benchmark on the SBA Math Assessment – Rural Alliance



What was the impact of New Leaders support on the academic achievement of historically underserved students (e.g., students of color, students from low-income communities)?

In focus groups and interviews, a few principals commented on the progress they had seen particularly for their underserved students. One principal (quoted below) whose school serves a large proportion of Hispanic students suggested that New Leaders was instrumental in terms of helping them develop a sense of direction and focus, which they felt contributed to their positive student outcomes.

> *"I have seen nothing but amazing growth in my teachers, seen nothing but amazing growth in the students, especially our underserved students. We're 80% Hispanic here, and a lot of our Hispanic students are underserved. We are seeing leaps and bounds of their progression. I am so over the moon proud. A lot of the tools from New Leaders have helped us continue to focus. There's just so many different ways you can get pulled through the day, but New Leaders helped us to stay on course."*

In open-ended survey responses, school leaders shared their perceptions of how the changes they and their staff made—based on their participation in New Leaders—have impacted students from historically underserved subgroups (N=35). School leaders reported a variety of positive changes and impacts. However, one-in-five surveyed leaders (20%) did not offer substantive feedback in this area, mentioning that their role was not directly linked to student outcomes, that this topic was not the primary focus of their recent work with New Leaders, or they were uncertain whether the changes they had seen in student growth could be attributed to New Leaders.

Surveyed school leaders commonly shared that they had made improvements in their schools' instructional and data-driven practices (31%) intended to support positive outcomes for historically underserved students. For example, some reported analyzing whole group and subgroup student data to identify implications for teaching practices to better serve students. Several shared that they were working on holding staff members accountable for addressing disparities in student discipline across different demographic groups. A couple of school leaders highlighted how New Leaders empowered them to better communicate and collaborate with their staff about supporting students from historically underserved groups, with one stating:

"I feel validated to lead courageous conversations regarding supporting students who are marginalized. We have made it a recurring practice to look at data by student groups with school staff to identify and state implications on teacher practice."

About one-third of surveyed school leaders (31%) reported making higher-level changes to systems and structures to address the needs of students from historically underserved subgroups. Leaders highlighted increased awareness of students' needs, and the prevalence and nature of bias, both personally, and among their colleagues. They also reported making changes to district visions and missions and strengthening their leadership teams as a result of their New Leaders work. Example of higher-level changes that were supported through New Leaders coaching include the implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) at the district level, and the development of an anti-hate and anti-bias speech protocol within a school. Additionally, leaders reported improving access to programs and resources (e.g., college and trade programs, school groups, and student resources) for student subgroups. Many leaders added in their survey responses that these changes are in progress and that the impact on students will be revealed over time.

A few surveyed school leaders (14%) shared their efforts in building equity into decision-making processes. They described using an equity lens and increasing student voice in decision-making with a focus on strengthening the representation of student subgroups. A few anecdotally reported increased student attendance, engagement, academic achievement, and gains in social-emotional learning among student subgroups, as impacts of the changes they had made based on their New Leaders program experience. One surveyed school principal wrote:

"In my building we have been focusing on a culture change and including all student views in the conversation. This has led to underserved groups becoming more involved in different school groups such as robotics, student leadership, student voice forums, and athletics. The impacted changes have been impactful in the social-emotional learning of our students."

Student assessment data were also explored to better understand the impact of New Leaders participation by school leaders on the academic achievement of historically

underserved students, including students of color and students from low-income households. For the purposes of this study, students of color are considered students whose racial/ethnic identity (according to their student demographic record) is any of the following:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Two or more races

As indicated above, students who identify as two or more races were included in the students of color subgroup. Based on the racial demographic information available through the Washington State Report Card data portal, it was not possible to determine if this subset of students identify as white or non-white. Further, we recognize that Hispanic/Latino is primarily an ethnic category, and that people can fall into any racial group within it. Because it was not possible to know which Hispanic/Latino students identified as white or non-white, we included this group in our analysis of students of color. As evaluators, we acknowledge that this method of disaggregating students includes limitations. The methods used in the current report are in line with a recent report on student achievement from the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP)[9].

Students considered low-income for the purposes of this report are those who, according to their student demographic records, are income eligible to qualify for the Free and Reduced Price Meal (FRPM) program. The findings that follow are organized into subsections comparing outcomes for students of color and low-income students from Vancouver Public Schools, Kent School District, and Rural Alliance treatment schools with students in matching demographic categories from comparison groups.

[9] WSIPP (September 2023). *Student Achievement and the Pandemic: Analysis of Test Scores, Earnings, and Recovery Interventions.* Document No. 23-09-2201.

Vancouver Public Schools

According to available data, the percentage of students of color attending Vancouver Public Schools who met their grade-level standard on both the SBA ELA assessment (Figure 21) and the SBA Math assessment (Figure 22) declined between the 2018-19 school year and the 2021-22 school year. In the school years since, the percentage of students of color meeting their grade level standard has remained largely steady. This trend is generally consistent with outcomes observed in the comparison school district (as the rather parallel graph lines for these two groups suggest).

Figure 21. Percent of Students of Color At or Above Benchmark on the SBA ELA Assessment – Vancouver

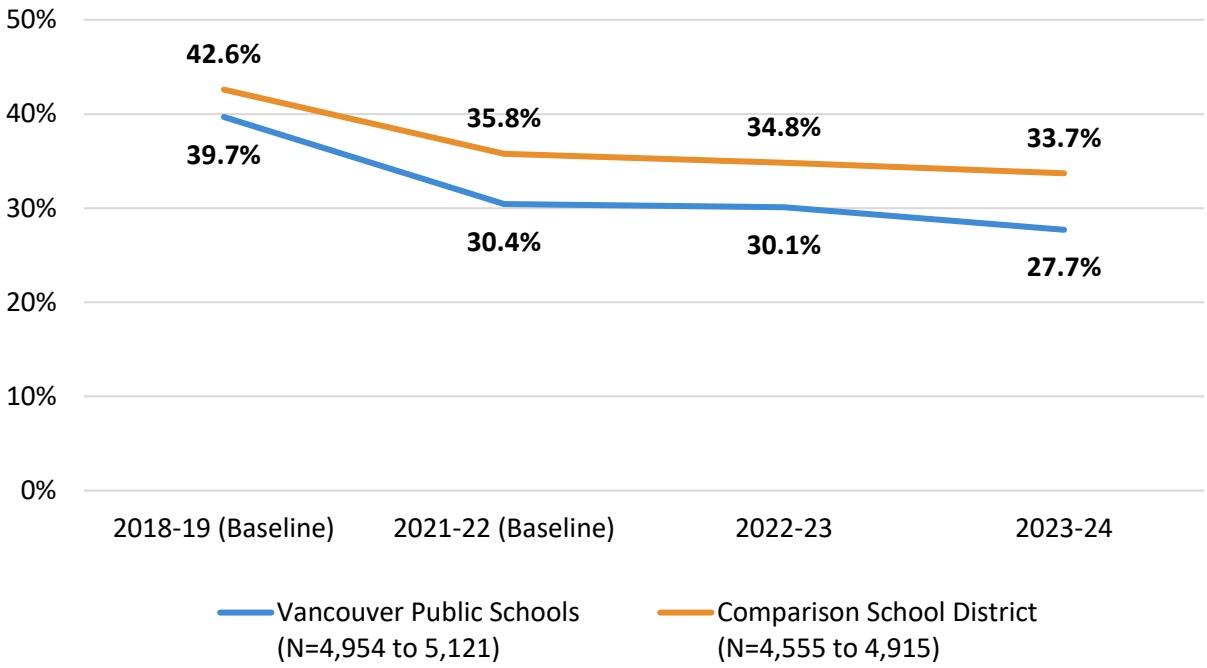
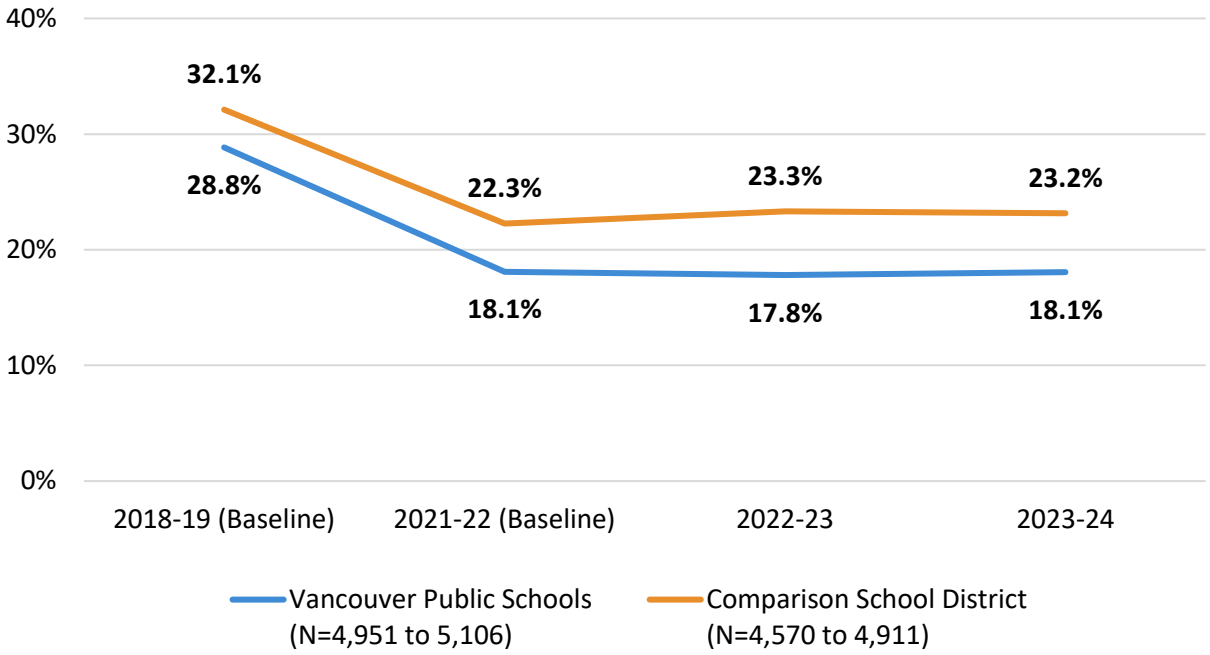


Figure 22. Percent of Students of Color At or Above Benchmark on the SBA Math Assessment – Vancouver



The percentage of Vancouver Public Schools students from low-income families who scored at benchmark for their grade-level on both the SBA ELA assessment (Figure 23) and the SBA Math assessment (Figure 24) declined between the 2018-19 school year and the 2021-22 school year. In the years since, the percentage of low-income students meeting their grade level standard has somewhat leveled off. Once again, outcomes observed in the comparison school district are generally consistent with those observed in the treatment district over time.

Figure 23. Percent of Low-Income Student At or Above Benchmark on the SBA ELA Assessment – Vancouver

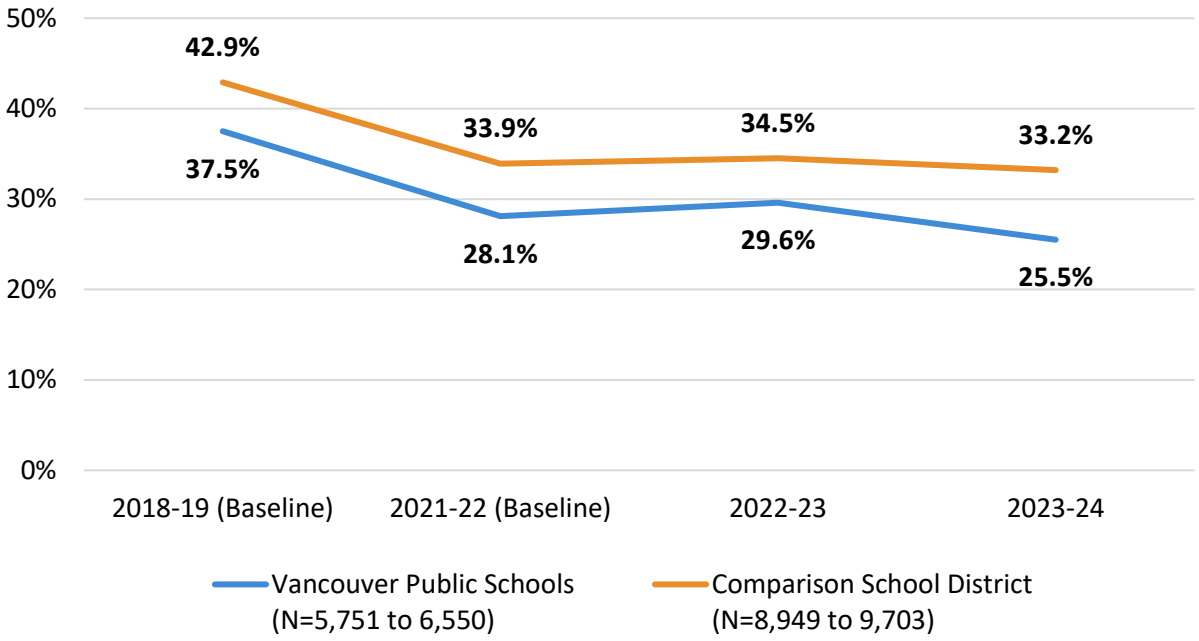
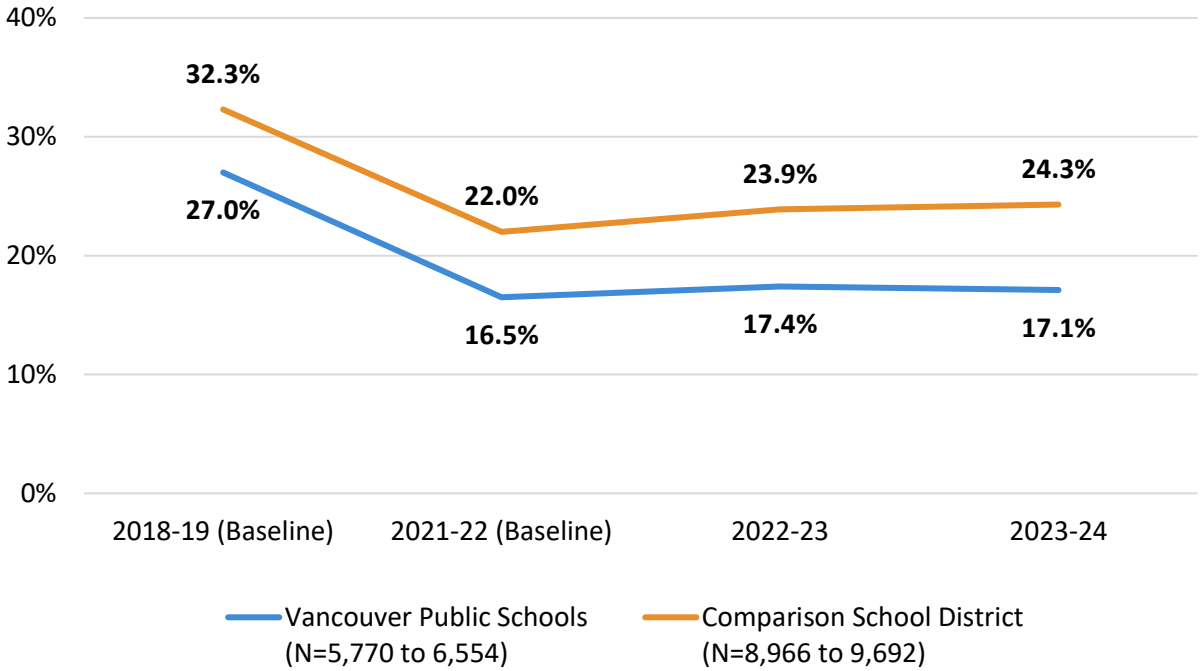


Figure 24. Percent of Low-Income Student At or Above Benchmark on the SBA Math Assessment – Vancouver



Kent School District

Based on available data, the percentage of students of color in the Kent School District meeting grade-level standards on both the SBA ELA assessment (Figure 25) and the SBA Math assessment (Figure 26) declined between the 2018-19 school year and the 2021-22 school year. Since then, the percentage has remained relatively stable. This pattern aligns with trends observed in the comparison school district.

Figure 25. Percent of Students of Color At or Above Benchmark on the SBA ELA Assessment – Kent

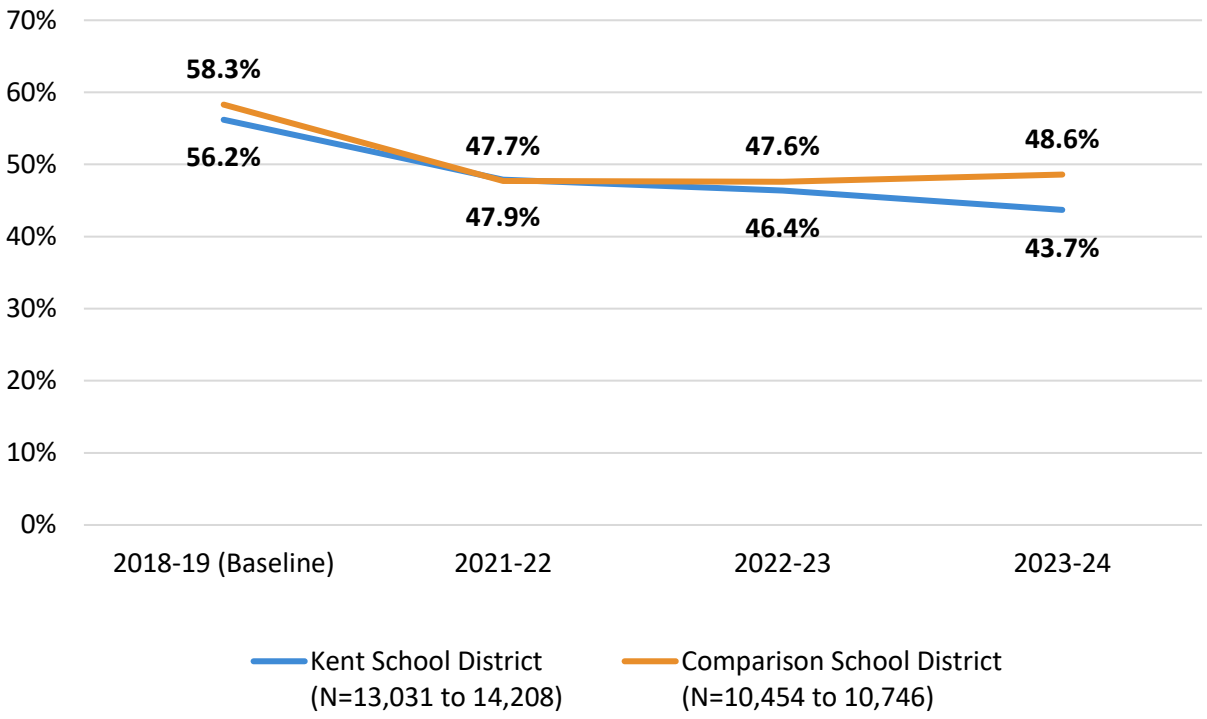
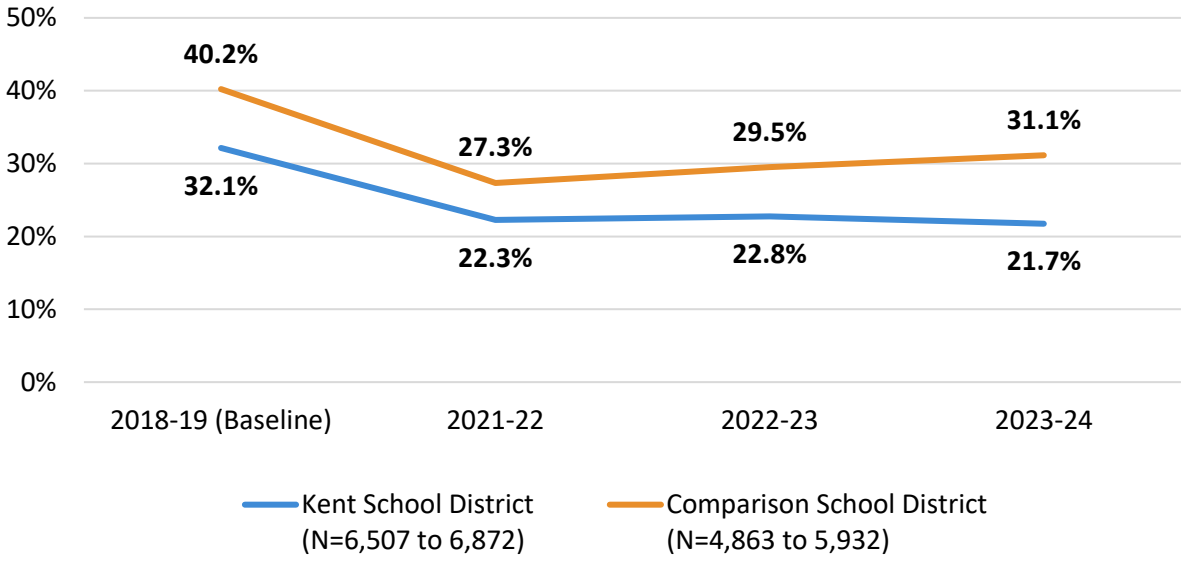


Figure 26. Percent of Students of Color At or Above Benchmark on the SBA Math Assessment – Kent



The percentage of Kent School District students from low-income families achieving grade-level benchmarks on both the SBA ELA assessment (Figure 27) and the SBA Math assessment (Figure 28) also declined between the 2018-19 school year and the 2021-22 school year. In subsequent years, this percentage has generally stabilized. Similarly, trends in the comparison school district mirror those observed in the Kent School District over time.

Figure 27. Percent of Low-Income Students At or Above Benchmark on the SBA ELA Assessment - Kent

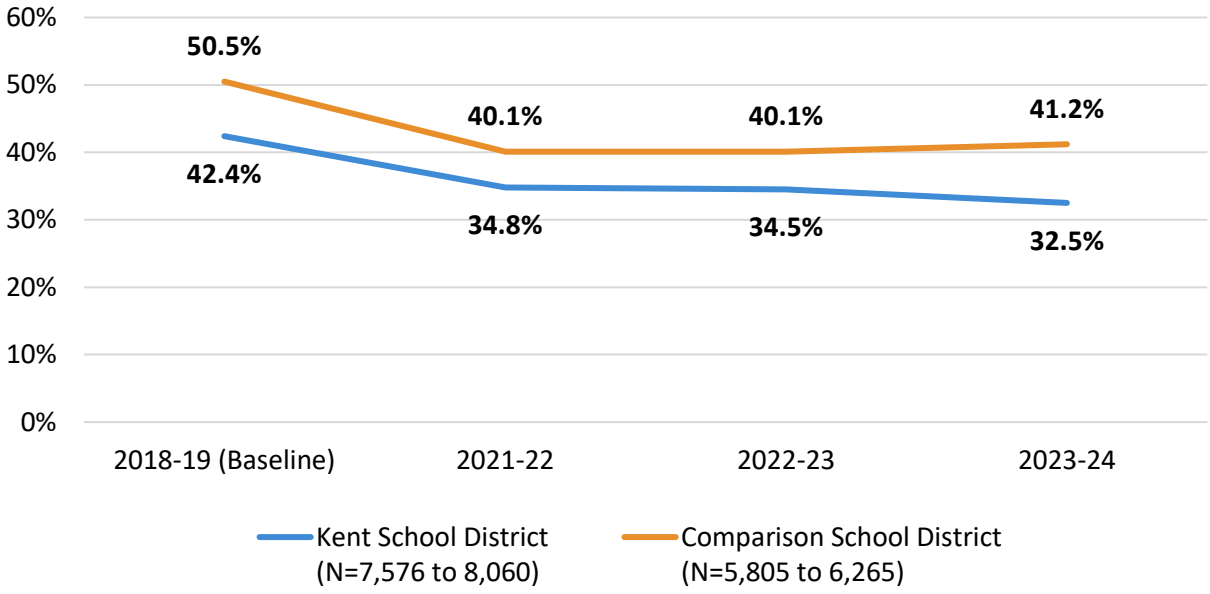
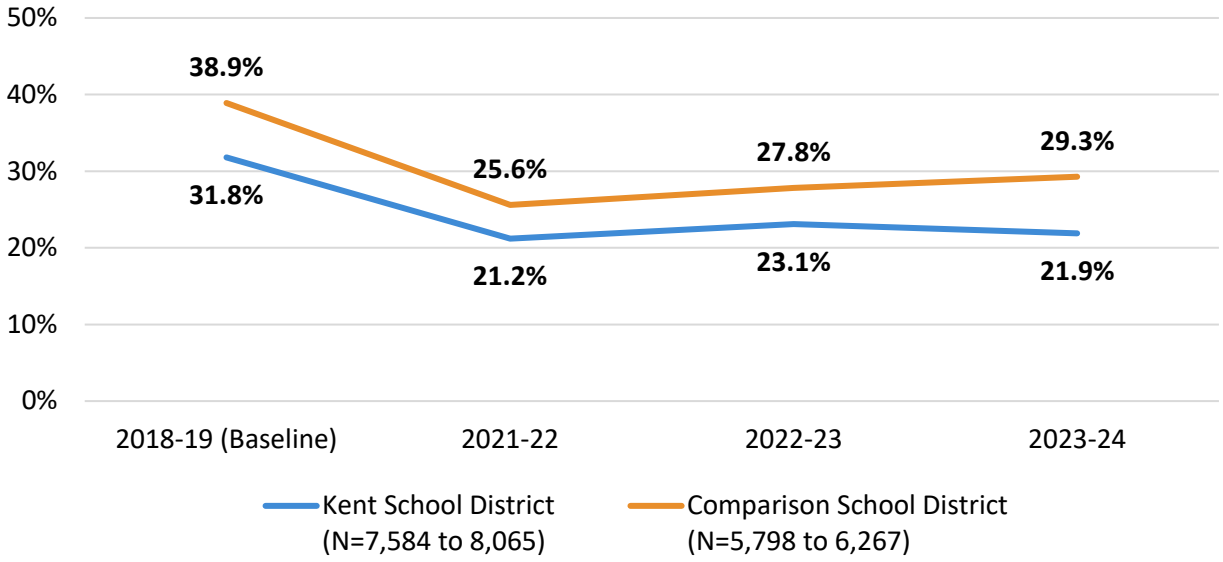


Figure 28. Percent of Low-Income Students At or Above Benchmark on the SBA Math Assessment - Kent



Rural Alliance

Figures 29 and 30 display the percentage of students of color at Rural Alliance schools (i.e., whose school leaders had participated in New Leaders) who met or exceeded their grade-level standards on the SBA ELA and Math assessment alongside comparable results from a group of control schools. According to these results, in the 2018-19 school year the performance of students of color on ELA and Math assessments was very close to the same as the performance of students of color from the comparison schools. A slight gap in achievement appears to have developed over time, in that approximately five percent more of the students of color within comparison schools were meeting benchmark on these assessments by the 2023-24 school year.

Figure 29. Percent of Students of Color At or Above Benchmark on the SBA ELA Assessment – Rural Alliance

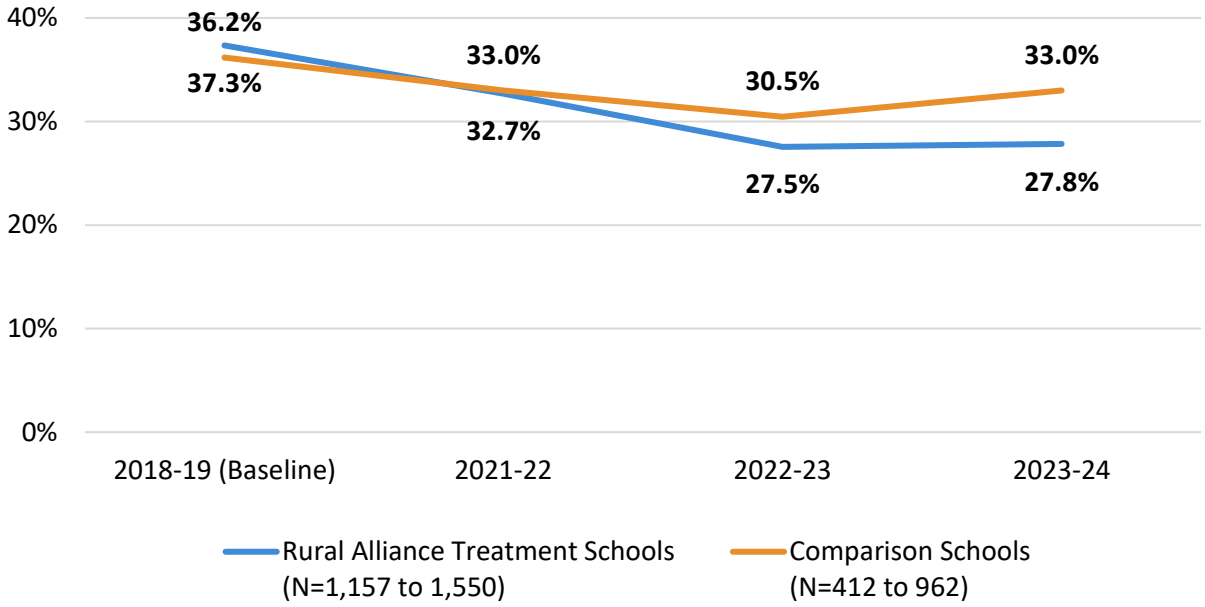
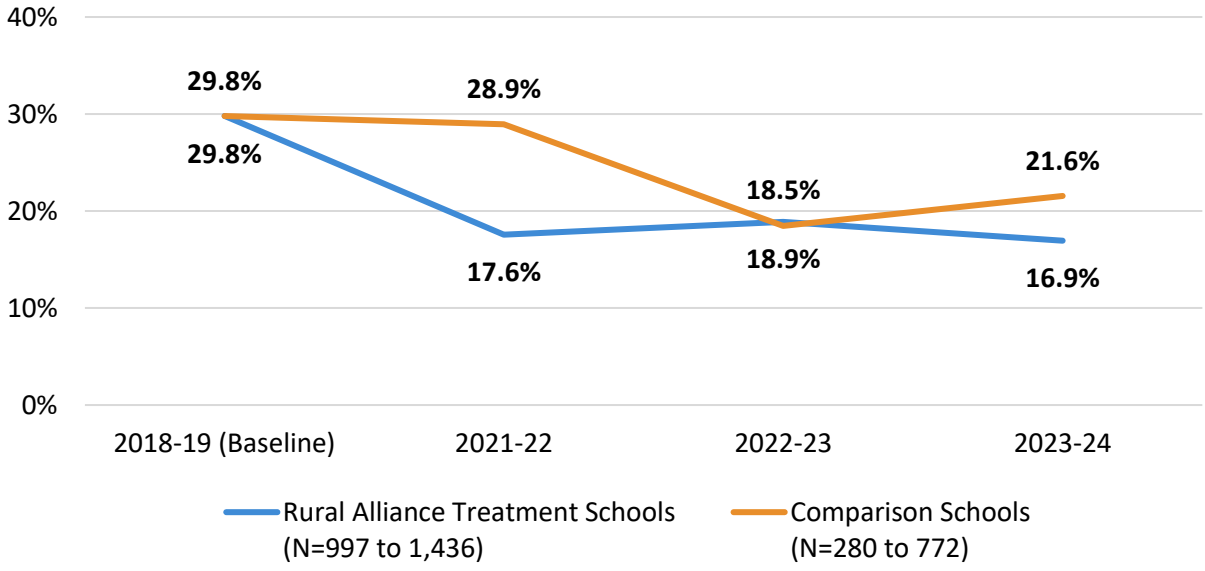


Figure 30. Percent of Students of Color At or Above Benchmark on the SBA Math Assessment – Rural Alliance



The percentage of students from low-income families who met the grade-level standard on the SBA ELA assessment (Figure 31) was nearly the same for Rural Alliance treatment schools and comparison schools for each year included in our analysis. When it comes to assessment scores for low-income students on the SBA Math assessment (Figure 32),

students from Rural Alliance treatment school and students from comparison group schools scored similarly at the most recent timepoint, and show similar trends over time.

Figure 31. Percent of Low-Income Students At or Above Benchmark on the SBA ELA Assessment – Rural Alliance

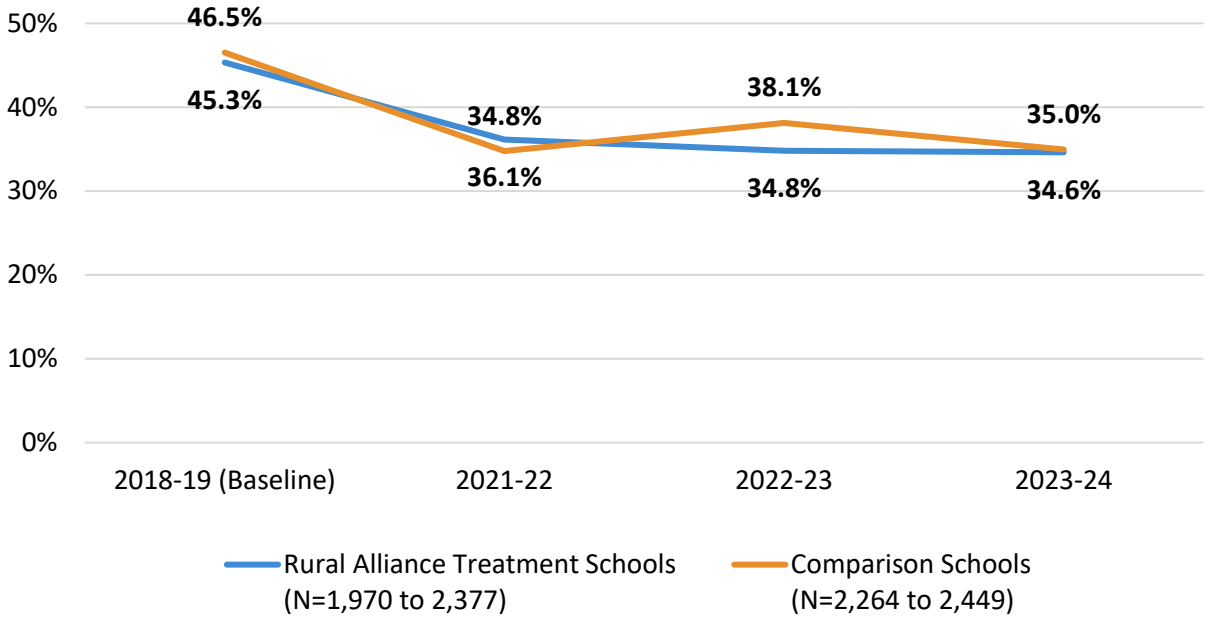
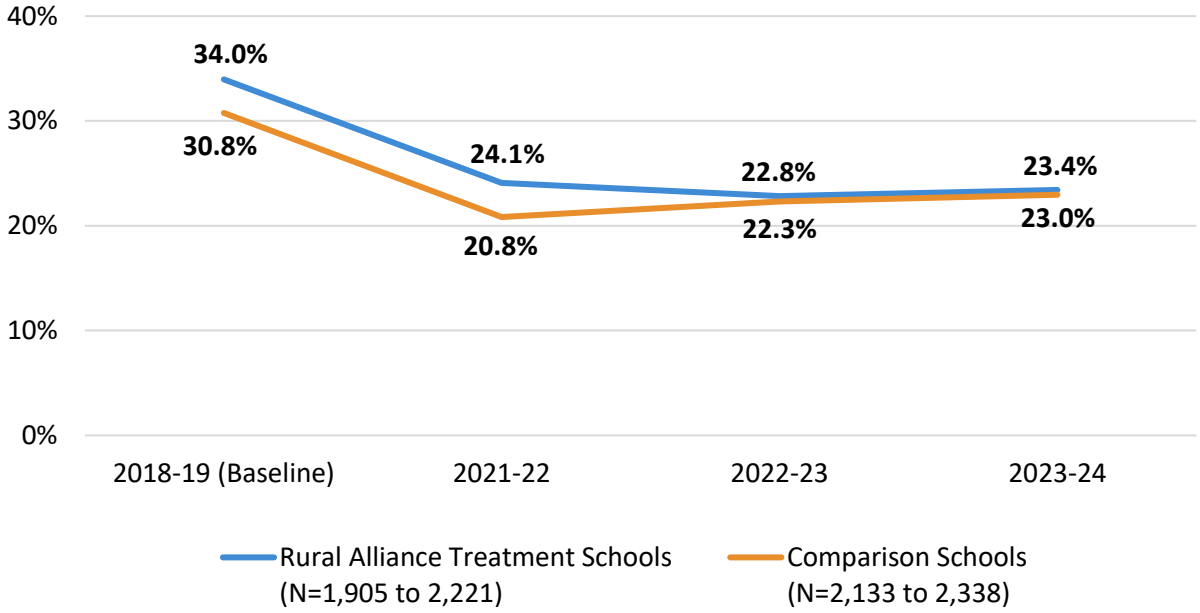


Figure 32. Percent of Low-Income Students At or Above Benchmark on the SBA Math Assessment – Rural Alliance



To what extent do other outcomes (e.g., student discipline rates) change in districts and schools receiving support from New Leaders?

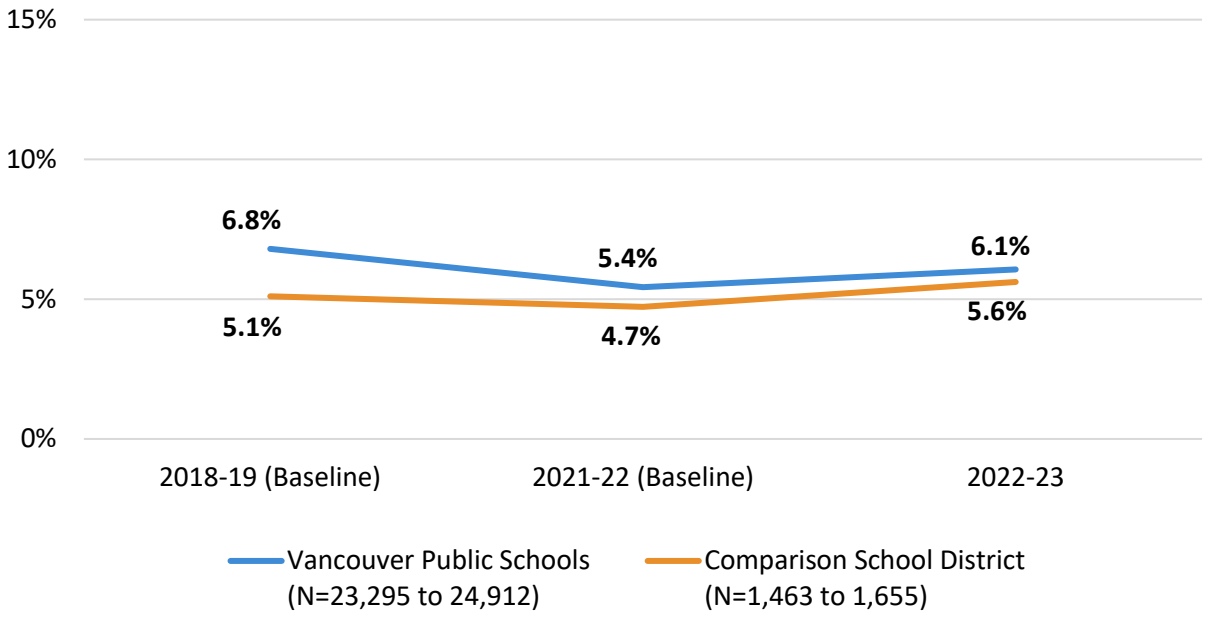
Student discipline data was analyzed to examine the potential impact of school leaders' participation in the New Leaders program on disciplinary outcomes. Specifically, the analysis focused on the percentage of students excluded from school (i.e., those receiving short- or long-term suspensions or expulsions) at any point during the school year in response to behavioral violations. The 2018-19 school year, prior to the involvement of New Leaders in Washington State, was used as the baseline against which to assess change over time for Kent School District and participating Rural Alliance schools. Data from both the 2018-19 school year and the 2021-22 school year is considered baseline data for Vancouver Public Schools, which began its New Leaders involvement during the 2022-23 school year.

Data from the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years were excluded from our analysis due to inconsistencies in data availability caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Data from the 2023-24 school year is also not included in our analysis because, at the time of writing this report, it had not yet been made publicly available. Finally, the comparison district matched with Kent School District throughout this report had no student disciplinary data available for the 2022-23 school year.

Vancouver Public Schools

Overall, the percentage of students in Vancouver Public Schools who were disciplined by being suspended or expelled for any length of time remained fairly consistent across the three school years explored in our analysis (see Figure 33), ranging from 5.4% to 6.8%. The matched comparison school district disciplinary data appears similarly consistent, ranging from 4.7% to 5.6%.

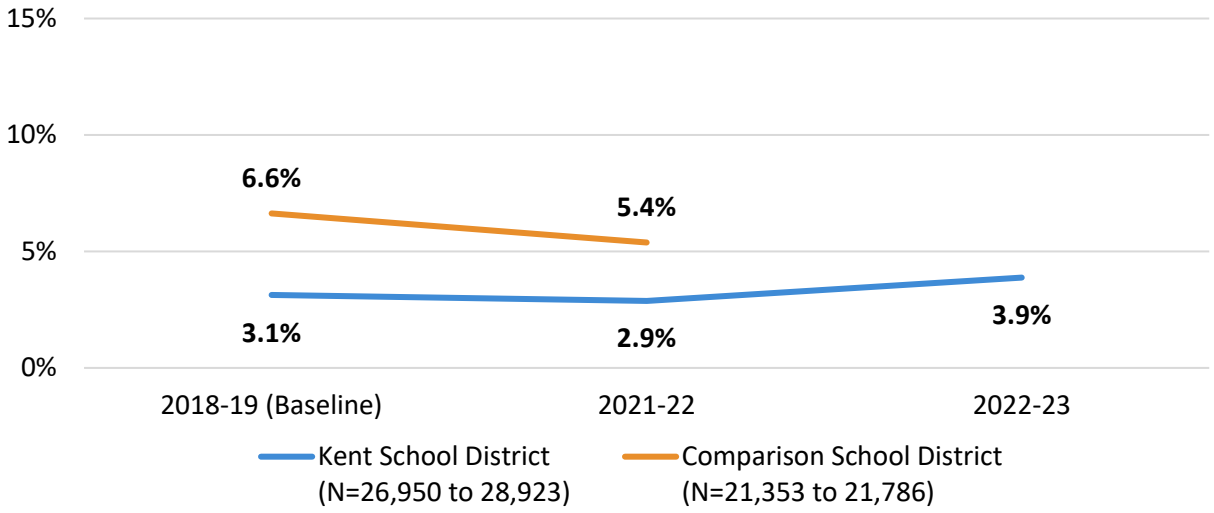
Figure 33. Percent of Students Excluded in Response to Behavioral Violation – Vancouver



Kent School District

The percentage of students excluded from Kent School District was consistently low, beginning at a baseline of 3.1% in the 2018-19 school year and remaining under 4% for each year of our data analysis (see Figure 34). The comparison district had slightly higher rates of disciplinary expulsion, which also remained consistent according to available data. Kent School District's lower rate of exclusionary discipline compared to the control district suggests that addressing student behaviors may be a strength of the district (and one which was present both before and during their New Leaders involvement).

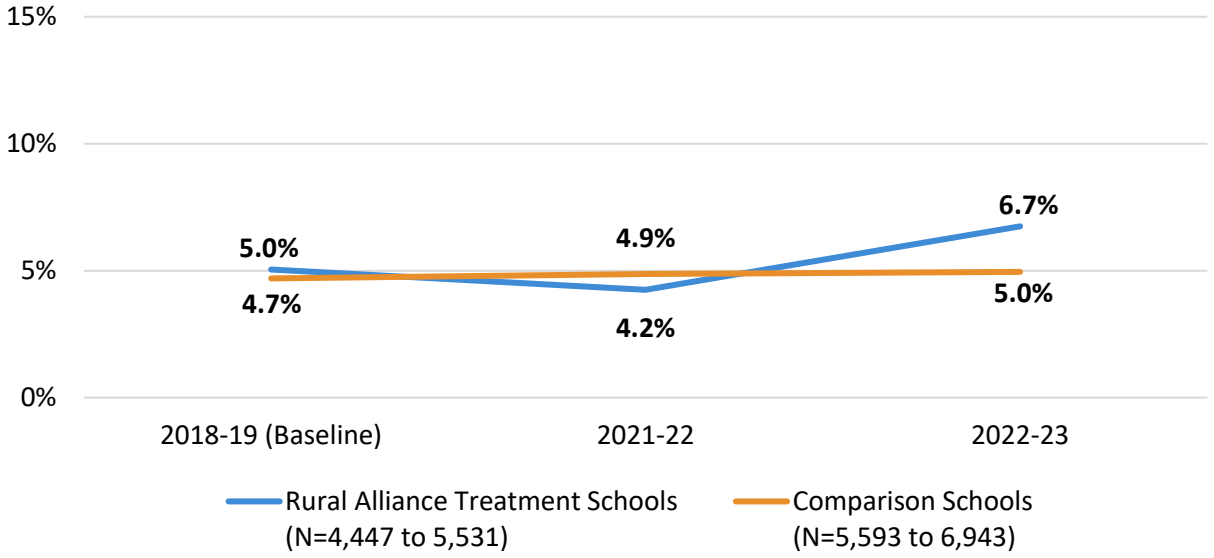
Figure 34. Percent of Students Excluded in Response to Behavioral Violation – Kent



Rural Alliance

Within participating Rural Alliance schools in our treatment group, the percentage of students excluded for disciplinary reasons varied slightly over the three years, with a small 2.5% increase between the 2021-22 and the 2022-23 school years. The rate of disciplinary exclusion of students at comparison group schools remained consistent over the three years (Figure 35).

Figure 35. Percent of Students Excluded in Response to Behavioral Violation – Rural Alliance



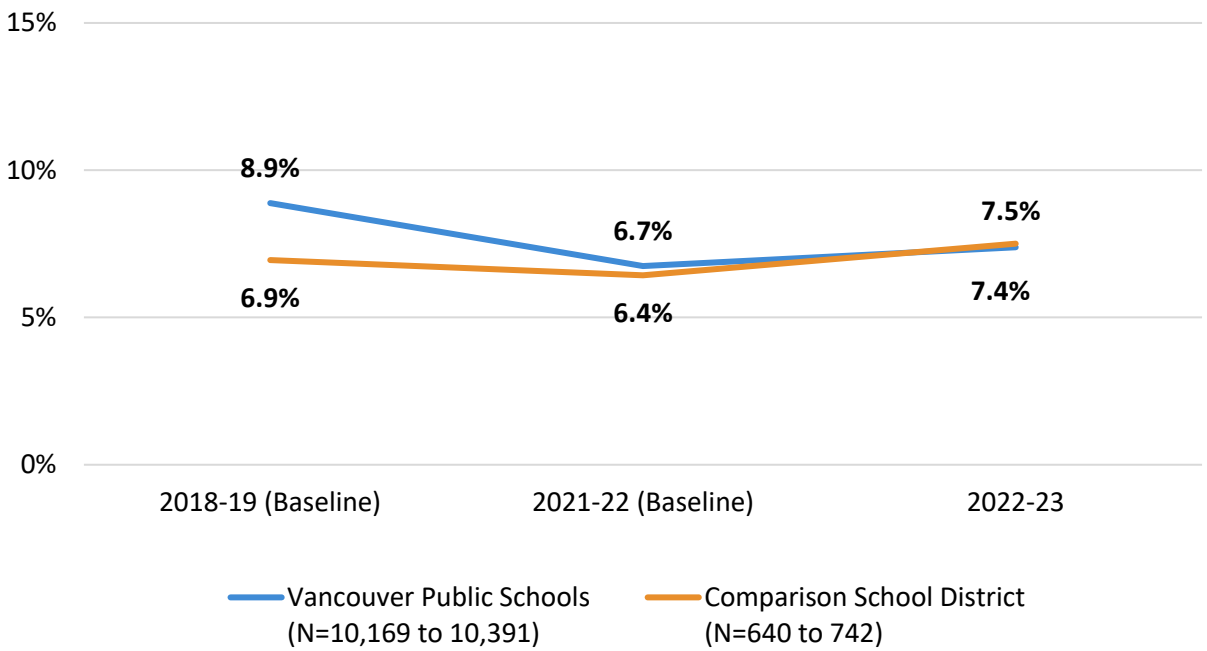
Does school or district discipline data provide evidence of successful outcomes associated with participating in New Leaders, including for historically underserved students?

Student disciplinary data was explored further to shed light on the potential impact of New Leaders on outcomes for historically underserved students, including students of color and students from low-income families. The following subsections discuss findings related to student discipline first for students of color and then for low-income students. Findings are presented separately for Vancouver Public Schools, Kent School District, and participating Rural Alliance schools (alongside findings from each matched control group).

Vancouver Public Schools

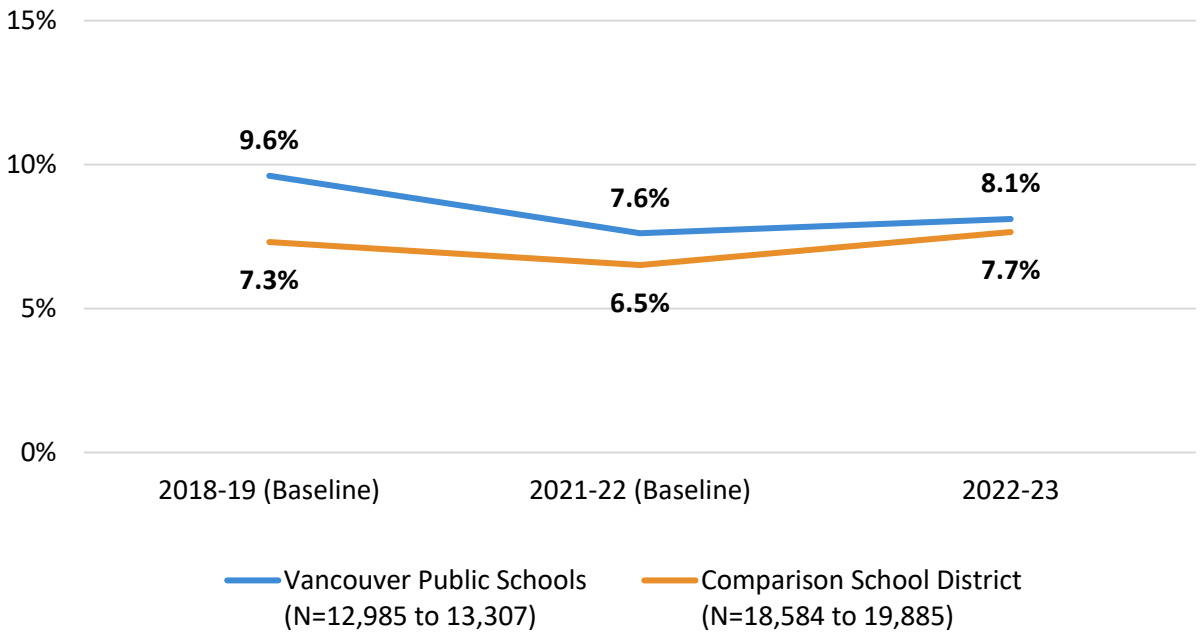
The percentage of students of color in Vancouver Public Schools who were disciplined by being suspended or expelled for any length of time did not notably change between the two baseline measurement school years (2018-19 and 2019-20) and the year in which New Leaders was implemented (the 2022-23 school year). The matched comparison school district also remained consistent over time (see Figure 36).

Figure 36. Percent of Students of Color Excluded in Response to Behavioral Violation – Vancouver



Similarly, the percentage of students from low-income households in Vancouver Public Schools who were disciplined with exclusion was not notably different between the baseline school years (2018-19 and 2019-20) and the New Leaders implementation year (the 2022-23 school year). The matched comparison school district also remained consistent over time.

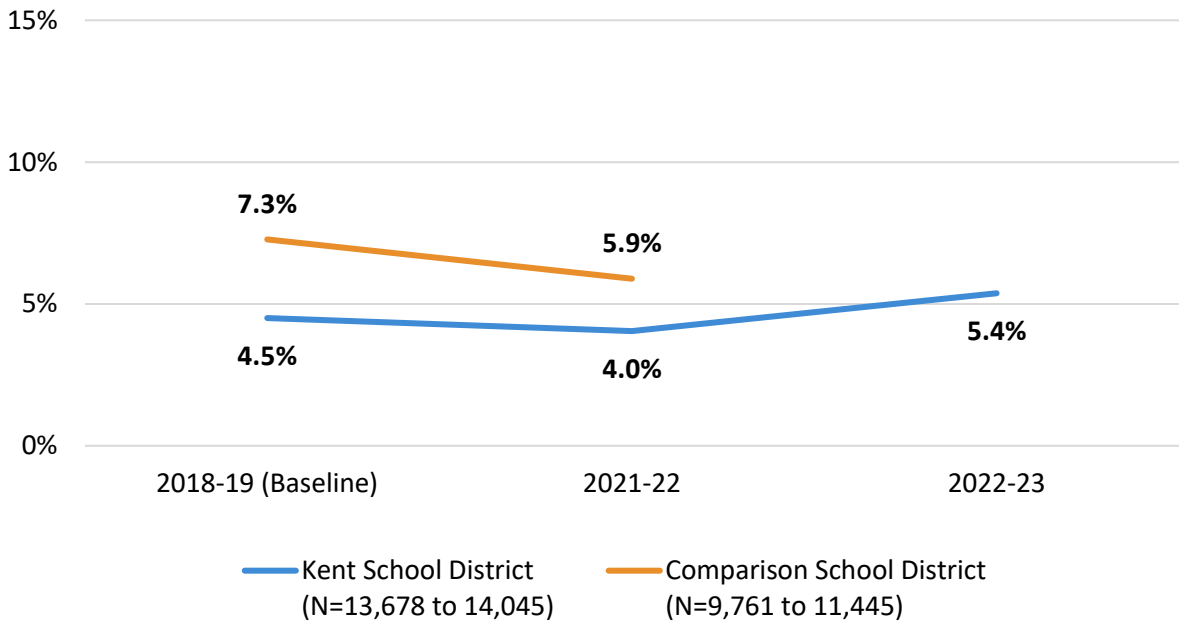
Figure 37. Percent of Low-Income Students Excluded in Response to Behavioral Violation – Vancouver



Kent School District

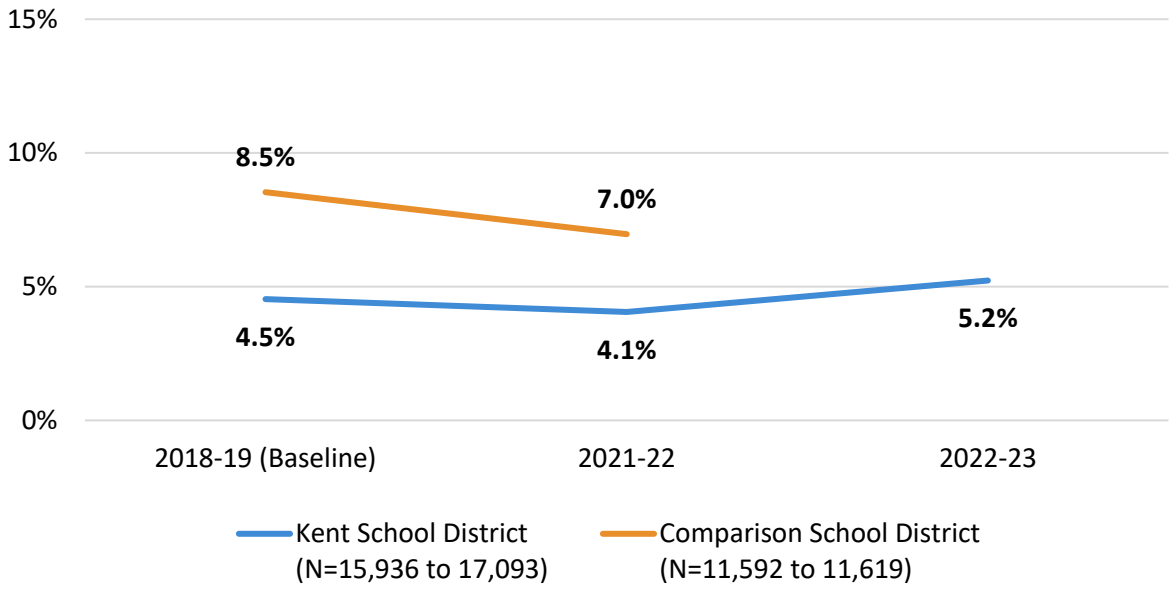
The percentage of students of color at Kent School District who were suspended or expelled showed little change between the baseline measurement year (2018-19) and the year that their New Leaders participation began (2021-22). Data from the matched comparison school district shows higher rates of exclusionary discipline directed at students of color at both timepoints compared to Kent School District (see Figure 38).

Figure 38. Percent of Students of Color Excluded in Response to Behavioral Violation – Kent



The percentage of students from low-income households attending Kent School District who were suspended or expelled remained largely unchanged across the three years of data analysis. Data from the matched comparison school district shows somewhat higher rates of exclusionary discipline directed at students from low-income families at both available timepoints compared to Kent School District (see Figure 39).

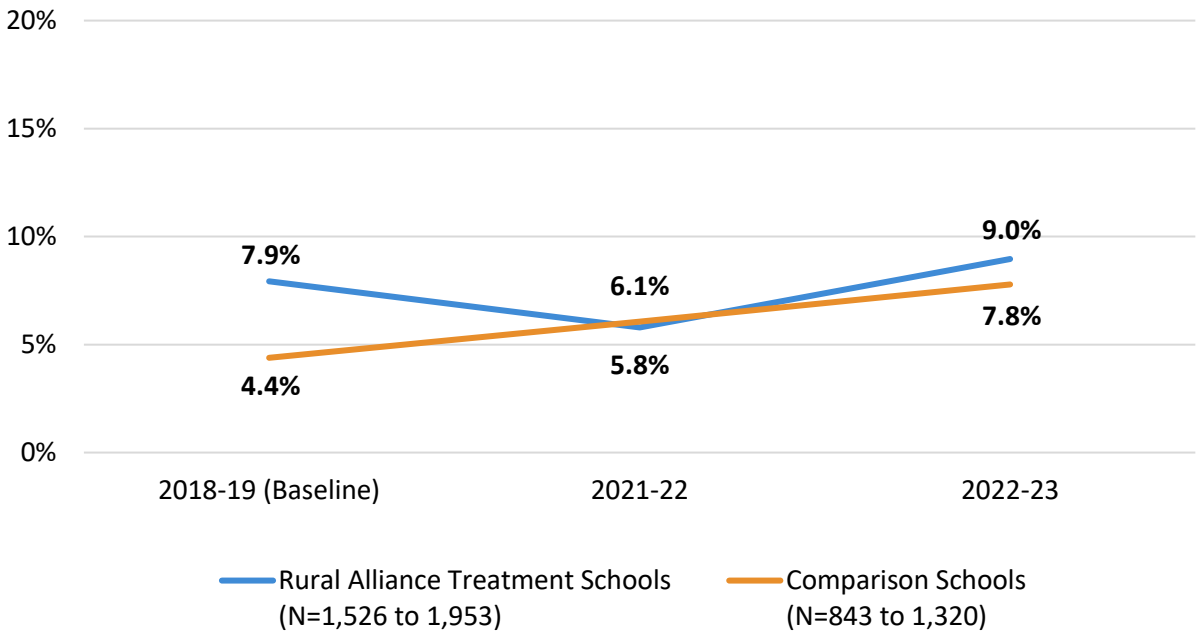
Figure 39. Percent of Low-Income Students Excluded in Response to Behavioral Violation – Kent



Rural Alliance

Data from Rural Alliance on the disciplinary outcomes for students of color do not provide evidence of any impact by the New Leaders program in this area. Rural Alliance schools that participated in New Leaders varied somewhat between the baseline measurement year (2018-19) and the two treatment timepoints, but did not show a strong indication of their exclusionary discipline rates either increasing or decreasing over time.

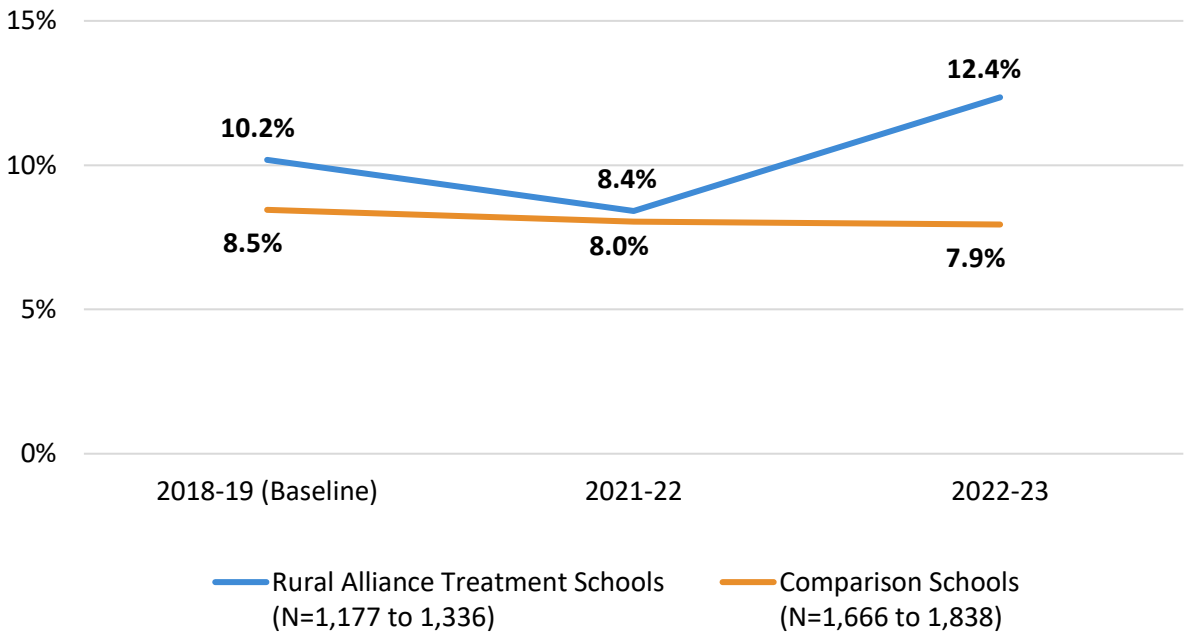
Figure 40. Percent of Students of Color Excluded in Response to Behavioral Violation – Rural Alliance



The percentage of students from low-income households who were excluded for disciplinary purposes by Rural Alliance treatment group schools notably increased between the 2021-22 school year and the 2022-23 school year (see Figure 41). Additionally, across all student groups (including findings shared above from Kent School District, Vancouver Public Schools and their comparison groups), **rural low-income students had the highest rates of exclusionary discipline**. These findings suggest that it may be beneficial for school leaders particularly in rural and low-income areas to receive additional professional development related to correcting behavioral challenges in non-exclusionary ways. They also indicate a need for future research to further explore how the circumstances specific to rural families (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of regional social services, limited job opportunities) may compound the challenges

faced by low-incomes families in ways that impact student behavior (e.g., by increasing family stress, decreasing adult supervision, or resulting in a lack of accessible prosocial extracurricular opportunities).

Figure 41. Percent of Low-Income Students Excluded in Response to Behavioral Violation – Rural Alliance



In what ways did participants' involvement in New Leaders impact their job satisfaction, retention, advancement, or career goals?

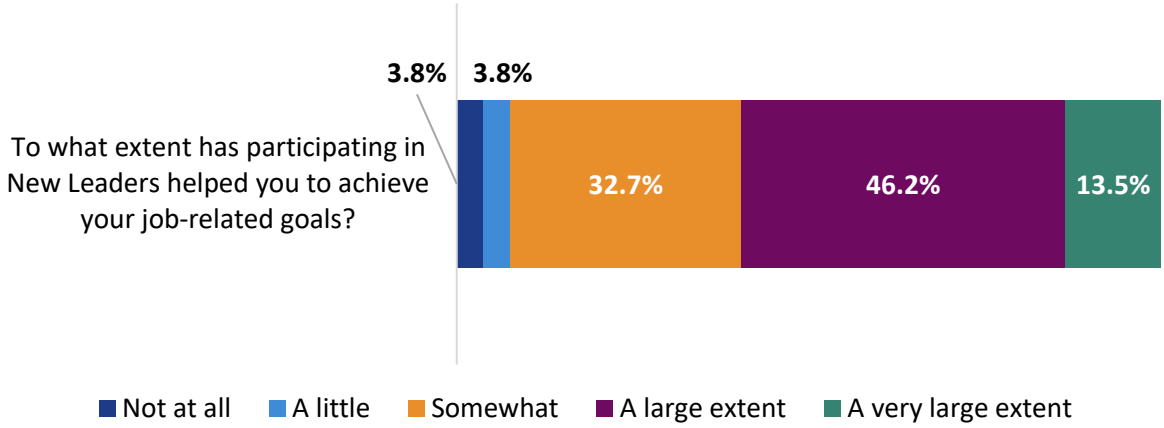
Surveyed school leaders (N=31) commented on whether they changed their job-related goals as a result of participating in New Leaders. About one-third (32%) of leaders reported making changes to their goal-setting processes. Nearly a quarter (23%) indicated that they did not change their job-related goals but felt that New Leaders had supported or reinforced the goals they already had. The quotes that follow demonstrate these two leading themes.

"Yes, as a result my personal job related goals have shifted priority wise a bit. I also find myself wanting to grow as a leader in different ways."

"No, but I have a deeper understanding of how to achieve my goals now."

Surveyed school leaders (N=52) were also asked to rate the extent to which New Leaders had helped them achieve their job-related goals. Among all survey participants, 59.7% indicated a large or very large extent of New Leaders impact in this area.

Figure 42. Impact of New Leaders on Professional Goal Achievement (N=52)



In open-ended survey responses, school leaders (N=33) shared additional insight about the impact of their participation in New Leaders on achieving their job-related goals. Overall, most participants (82%) praised New Leaders for its positive impact on their work, echoing many themes noted throughout this report. Top themes among leaders' feedback included positive developments in their communication skills and collaborative practices with their team (n=8), experiencing personal growth and increased confidence in collaborating (n=7), finding great value in the coaching they received and appreciating their coach as a thought partner (n=6), developing in the areas of goal-setting and planning (n=5), and furthering instructional and equity-driven practices (n=5). Additionally, leaders appreciated that New Leaders provided valuable tools, resources and professional development (n=2).

School leaders who participated in interviews and focus groups (N=11) also commented on the ways in which their participation in New Leaders had influenced their job satisfaction. Many participants emphasized that New Leaders provided emotional and professional support, reducing feelings of isolation in demanding roles and increasing job satisfaction, as the following comments exemplify.

"It's helped build a community around me of like-minded individuals whom I can call when I need to."

"A million percent, it's helped my job satisfaction… I now feel I am not alone."

Several interview participants (quoted below) shared how New Leaders played a role in helping them gain clarity in their career path and persevere through moments of doubt, ultimately reinforcing their commitment to their roles.

"I still have moments of thinking, 'I don't know if [staying in my job] is worth it.' There's lots of sleepless nights and there's lots of anxiety. I think having a coach, somebody who I can talk to, and knowing that other people are in the same situation has helped a lot."

"At the beginning of the year… I didn't know where I should be going, and [New Leaders] has really helped give me some direction."

"I don't know how long I would have stuck with it without something like this."

Scaling Impact

How can effective leadership practices learned through New Leaders be scaled to maximize impact for schools and communities?

Surveyed New Leaders participants (N=21) shared their recommendations for maximizing the impact of New Leaders programming on schools and communities. While individual suggestions varied, key themes that emerged include focusing on fostering collaboration and building buy-in, continuing leadership training, and supporting alignment with district and school goals.

The majority of survey participants (66.6%) made suggestions related to fostering collaboration and buy-in. Several of these emphasized the importance of cultivating strong collaboration among school leaders, teachers, central office staff, community organizations, and families. Their suggestions included:

- Conducting more meetings between schools and community interest holders to strengthen partnerships and buy-in.

- Increasing collaboration and relationship-building between administrators in schools and central office leadership.
- Offering additional training and activities for teachers to provide them with more knowledge and skill related to New Leaders initiatives.

Several surveyed school leaders emphasized the importance of expanding and continuing access to New Leaders programming in order to maximize the program's reach and efficacy. Their comments included the following suggestions:

- Training for district directors to enhance their facilitation of collaborative activities.
- Providing ongoing professional development for school leaders to sustain and deepen the impact of New Leaders programming over time.
- Hosting New Leaders sessions earlier in the year to ensure school leaders can implement strategies effectively from the start.

One survey participant noted a need for more equitable resource allocation across schools, which would help to ensure that all school leaders have the tools they need to foster school and student success. Another school leader, quoted below, suggested that raising awareness about the New Leaders programming and the coaching, resources, and tools that they offer may be an essential avenue for increasing program utilization.

"I knew about New Leaders through my previous district, which is how I knew to reach out. I did not learn about it through my current district. This is important because a lack of awareness minimizes the potential impact that New Leaders can have."

Finally, several surveyed leaders shared their perspectives that the impact of New Leaders may better be seen over a longer period of time. Participants felt that they were still learning from the resources and tools they had received through their experience with New Leaders, and many noted that their implementation of changes were in the early phase, as highlighted in the following concluding comments.

"The more I navigate through the New Leaders resources, the more I realize their value. The key for me is to revisit these resources over time."

"Change takes time. I am a work in progress."

Case Study 1:
Eisenhower Elementary School

Data for this study were collected between June and August 2024 and include an interview with school principal Mark Jordan, interviews and focus groups with a sample of Eisenhower teachers (N=7), and Jordan's responses to the Personal Leadership self-assessment rubric (Appendix A).

Introduction

Eisenhower Elementary School is part of the Vancouver Public School District. In the 2023-24 school year, 438 students from kindergarten through fifth grade were enrolled at Eisenhower. While the majority of the student body is white/Caucasian (58.9%), there is broad diversity among the student population with varying cultural, socioeconomic, and educational needs represented. Mark Jordan became the school's principal in 2022 and participated in New Leaders throughout his first two years at Eisenhower. Under his leadership, the school has undertaken initiatives to improve equity, foster collaboration, and enhance academic outcomes. This case study delves into how Eisenhower's leadership teams, collaborative structures, and equity-focused practices are shaping its progress, as well as the ongoing efforts the school is making to further improve and address challenges.

Leadership Philosophy

Principal Jordan's leadership is rooted in the principles of belief-based, goal-driven and equity-focused leadership, as outlined in the New Leaders Transformational Leadership Framework (TLF). His

"Eisenhower does have a larger white population, but we also have a Chinese population, as well as Russian, Hispanic, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese families. We're trying to make sure that all voices are heard in discussions and decisions."

- Teacher

"Eisenhower has always been a central part of the community, and we strive to create an environment where everyone feels connected and valued."

- Principal Jordan

"We've worked really hard to build a sense of community among families."

- Teacher

responses to the self-assessment rubric highlight a commitment to creating an inclusive school environment, supporting student achievement, and fostering community engagement.

- **Belief-Based Leadership:** Jordan reflected on his belief that, with the right support, all students can achieve at high levels. He connects this belief with specific strategies, such as emphasizing standards-based instruction and ensuring all classrooms have learning targets and success criteria clearly associated with lessons.
- **Equity-Focused Leadership:** The principal's leadership focuses on equity by addressing biases and including diverse perspectives in decision-making, with a hope to increasingly include student voice. The rubric indicates he actively works to incorporate student and family voices, while acknowledging that this is an area for continued growth.

Implementation

Jordon's leadership philosophy is reflected in Eisenhower's initiatives to address disparities and create a more inclusive environment. However, teachers noted that equity efforts sometimes feel undefined, reflecting the principal's self-assessment responses. Two specific efforts around equity at Eisenhower include:

- **Increased Representation:** The school librarian has played a vital role in helping the school promote greater inclusivity by increasing cultural awareness and curating books and resources that reflect and celebrate cultural diversity.

"I believe all students can achieve at high levels. Their success is based on belief in themselves, which can be changed with a strong teacher and other school adults supporting the student in a positive and caring way."

- Principal Jordan

"Equity is a big focus, but not always applied well. We need clear steps, and I believe student voice is key to understanding and addressing inequity."

- Principal Jordan

"Our librarian announces cultural celebrations every month. You go into the library, and the first thing you see is a display that reflects and celebrates that culture. It's amazing to see that shift."

- Teacher

"It's difficult to keep parents on the Equity Team due to work schedules. We've been trying to provide meals and childcare, but participation is still inconsistent."

- Teacher

- **Equity Team:** The Equity Team began during Jordan's first year as principal and is an evolving effort to integrate diverse family voices into school decision-making. This initiative has faced challenges, including inconsistent parent participation, and a lack of equal input from across the school community. Addressing these challenges is an important priority for the school.

Another recent initiative at Eisenhower is aimed at supporting all students and reducing behavioral challenges that can get in the way of learning:

- **Room 110:** This room is a calming space where kids can go when they or their teacher feel they need a break from the classroom. Several schools across the district have implemented similar spaces with the help of the district's behavior coach. It is a structured space where students can self-regulate. While most teachers expressed positive views on Room 110, a couple had doubts that it would sufficiently deter unwanted student behavior.

Collaborative Leadership Structures

Collaboration and interpersonal-leadership are areas that Jordan emphasized on his self-reflective rubric. Collaboration is supported at Eisenhower by distributed leadership teams including the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), the Guiding Coalition, and the Site-Based Leadership Team (SBLT).

- **PLCs:** These weekly meetings enable teachers to align their practices with essential standards, analyze student progress, and develop interventions for those who are struggling.

"A challenge we have on the Equity Team is that some voices are louder than others. We're working on structuring meetings differently to hear from all participants equally."

- Teacher

"We've seen fewer disruptions because kids can leave before they escalate. They come back more ready to learn."

- Teacher

"There are rarely consequences for extreme behaviors. Without accountability, students don't feel motivated to change."

- Teacher

"All grade-level teachers are part of a PLC… there's tons of collaboration. The consistency of meeting every week is really, really valuable."

- Teacher

"The Guiding Coalition makes sure we are PLC-ing correctly and that everything is standards-based. It's about helping us focus on the four guiding questions for PLCs."

- Teacher

- **Guiding Coalition:** This is a distributed leadership group that is tied to PLCs and ensures that PLC meetings stay focused on instructional goals rather than logistical or administrative topics. Each grade-level has a representative on the Guiding Coalition, and the principal serves as a member alongside teacher leaders.
- **SBLT:** This multi-grade-level team is a collaborative decision-making group. The SBLT brings together staff from multiple grade levels and specialties to discuss and address school-wide issues. Challenges for this team include ensuring consistent communication between the SBLT and the rest of the staff and translating decisions into actions.

"What's nice about how Mr. Jordan runs the SBLT is it's not his decision—it's our decision. We make decisions as a team, and then take them to the whole staff for input."

- Teacher

"One of the challenges we've faced is making sure communication flows from the SBLT to the staff. Sometimes things we agree on as a team don't always translate well into action or follow-through."

- Teacher

Challenges and Opportunities

Several additional challenges and concerns were noted by teachers, particularly in terms of budget and resource constraints and the restructuring of the Highly Capable student program (HiCap).

"Mark does the best that he can with what he's given from the district, but it is a lot of budget flexing and trying to figure out how you make it work when you don't have it."

- Teacher

- **Budget Issues:** Teachers expressed concern that some of the resources needed to implement their curriculum were not provided by the district or included in the school's budget.
- **Changes to HiCap Program:** A recent district decision has resulted in the program changing from a magnet model that brings HiCap students from multiple school service areas together at Eisenhower into a dedicated classroom, to a format that will focus on serving local HiCap students by clustering them together into general classrooms. Teachers expressed concerns that educators do not have the necessary support to implement cluster classrooms effectively.

I haven't seen any training come for those [HiCap cluster classroom] teachers to get the support and knowledge that they need to do a good job with that yet. It makes me very anxious."

- Teacher

- **Need for more Teacher Leaders:** While the distributed leadership model is a strength at Eisenhower, some teachers noted a pattern of the same staff declining to take on projects or be a part of school efforts outside of their classrooms. Teachers who do take on that extra work may feel repeatedly overburdened; a situation that would be eased somewhat by a more equitable distribution of work.
- **Publicly sharing Clear Expectations:** Principal Jordan noted this as an area for improvement according to his self-assessment. He reflected several times on the need to enhance communication with families and include more student voice (mentioned above), but also reflected on the need for more clear communication to come from him to his school community. He noted goals for the coming year in terms of increasing the clarity with which he communicates expectations to diverse school interest holders.

Conclusion

Eisenhower Elementary School is navigating a transformative period under Jordan's leadership. The school's focus on collaboration, equity, and community engagement is helping school staff to face challenges and encourage continued growth. By addressing challenges such as behavior management and communication, Eisenhower has the potential to be a model of inclusive, student-centered education.

"I think there's a culture in our building where the people who do, do a lot, and the people who don't do would rather not. I don't know how to handle that, but getting more people involved has been a little hard."

- Teacher

"This coming year, I do see a need to be more communicative and transparent about goals, struggles and where we need support. I want to be as clear about expectations and goals as I can and make that information easy to access."

- Principal Jordan

"New Leaders helped me think more deeply about equity and the importance of student voice in making real progress."

- Principal Jordan

Case Study 2:
Mansfield Elementary & High School

Data for this study were collected between July and December 2024, and include an interview with school principal Lisa Guzman, a focus group with a sample of Mansfield teachers (N=2), and Guzman's responses to the Personal Leadership self-assessment rubric (Appendix A).

Introduction

Mansfield Elementary and High School is the single school comprising the Mansfield School District. It is also part of the Rural Alliance, a rural educational leadership collaborative in Washington State. In the 2023-24 school year, 109 students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade were enrolled at Mansfield. The school serves as a central hub for its close-knit community of approximately 350 residents.

The student population is predominantly White/Caucasian (70.6%), while Hispanic/Latino students comprise a sizable portion (23.9%). Lisa Guzman, who became the school's principal in 2022, participated in New Leaders through the Rural Alliance during her first two years at Mansfield. Guzman was drawn to New Leaders because of the opportunities it presented to receive coaching and to network with other rural school leaders. During her time as principal, Guzman has established a school leadership team and implemented initiatives to increase community connections and foster students' engagement in learning.

> *"Everything happens here. The school is used for community events; the alumni get together and have reunions here. This school truly is the center of the community. As much as the school uses the building, so does the community."*
>
> *- Teacher*

> *"Because we're so rural, it has been really important for me to seek out networking opportunities. I still talk with some of the people that I met through New Leaders. We get to collaborate, and I really am appreciative."*
>
> *- Principal Guzman*

Leadership Philosophy

Principal Guzman's leadership style aligns closely with the principles of belief-based, goal-driven leadership and resilient leadership, as outlined in the New Leaders Transformational Leadership Framework (TLF). Her responses to the self-assessment rubric demonstrate high expectations, a focus on student achievement, and a commitment to overcoming challenges.

- **Goal-Driven Leadership:** Guzman reflected that she is always committed to finding entry points for every student to achieve. While she acknowledges that it will take time, she places a high sense of urgency around efforts to close achievement gaps, making this a daily focus that is supported by a systems-level approach.
- **Resilient Leadership:** As principal and a new member of her rural community, Guzman has approached challenges as opportunities for growth and development. While encountering some resistance to change, she has maintained a strong resolve to focus on her goals and not allow setbacks to shake her confidence.

Implementation

Principal Guzman has introduced a distributed leadership model and implemented innovative initiatives to build community and support academic achievement, as outlined below:

- **Distributed leadership team:** Using many of the tools and resources from New Leaders, Guzman formed a new distributed leadership team at Mansfield. This team consists of a mix of elementary and secondary school teachers, as well as support staff, and has begun the work of aligning school objectives with measurable goals and making data-informed decisions.

> *"Helping students achieve at high levels is always at the forefront of my mind, and my leadership team. We have outlined a plan and set a school wide goal to equip students with current soft skills and skills that will be needed in the year 2030."*
>
> *- Principal Guzman*

> *"The purpose of the new school leadership team is to decide on one to three yearly objectives that will support the mission of our school and inform the way we use our funds. We choose our objectives based on available data."*
>
> *- Teacher*

- **No-zero policy:** One of the most impactful recent changes at Mansfield has been the implementation of a no-zero policy for missing assignments in middle and high school. The policy allows for late work to be turned in but works to encourage full completion of graded assignments by students. It has been transformative both in the way that educators approach their work and in the academic success of students.

- **Community Roundup:** This monthly meeting was introduced by Guzman during her second year at Mansfield. It was an open format with coffee and donuts that invited anyone in the community to come in, hear news from school leaders, and share their thoughts and ideas. It also encouraged collaboration and involvement with parents, which resulted in an increase in parent volunteers taking on projects at the school, including reorganizing the school library and advising on curricula.

- **Passion Projects:** Another highlight that is being implemented in the 2024-25 school year is the school-wide passion project program aimed at fostering student engagement. The passion project will span all grade levels, K-12, and is designed to allow students to explore and showcase their individual interests. Students will have time during the school year to work on these projects, culminating in a school-wide showcase. The idea of passion projects came out of the new distributed leadership team.

"Kids don't get to say, 'I'm just going to take a zero,' and move on. All of them are due, that's the expectation."

- Principal Guzman

"I think the policy improved my instructional practices. It really made me reflect on what assignments matter. My gradebooks are smaller now because I'm only counting the important stuff."

- Teacher

"[Parent volunteers] are helping make decisions and improvements in our building. Somebody just needed to get it started and give them that opportunity; now they are very involved."

- Teacher

"The goal of the passion projects is to help students navigate barriers, learn decision-making, and discover their interests. It's about developing their confidence."

- Principal Guzman

Challenges and Opportunities

> *"We've been through a lot of big changes. To be very honest, we have had some big failures under previous leaders. It just seems like with every new leadership, we try something new, and it doesn't always stick."*
>
> *- Teacher*

While many teachers at Mansfield have been with the school for years, the district has faced notable administrative turnover, including in the principal role. This history has made some educators hesitant to embrace change initiatives, as their experience suggests these efforts may not be sustained over time. Guzman acknowledges this challenge, seeing it as an expected circumstance in terms of what new principals face. Her approach to addressing resistance is reflected in the initiatives she has implemented (described above), which include efforts to actively involve staff and community members in school decision making. Further, she recognizes the strengths that staff longevity brings to the school community in terms of institutional knowledge, continuity, and community connectedness.

Conclusion

Principal Guzman's journey at Mansfield so far illustrates the challenges that leaders of rural schools may face, and how resilient leadership and innovative thinking can help to overcome those challenges. It also offers an example of the power of distributed leadership and community engagement in establishing buy-in and building capacity to make change.

Insights & Recommendations

- School leaders perceived a great deal of value from the coaching they received through New Leaders, as well as the opportunities New Leaders gave them to network and collaborate with other professionals in their field. Especially among rural school leaders who may be one of only a few administrators in their districts, the chance to engage and exchange ideas with a group of people working in a similar setting was highly impactful.

- A number of factors made participating in New Leaders more challenging at times for some individuals. Most often, these challenges were time and scheduling related. Some participants were able to successfully mitigate these challenges by setting aside dedicated time for their New Leaders activities or working from home on days when they had New Leaders obligations in order to avoid distractions. To help alleviate this challenge, New Leaders could consider avoiding scheduling demanding program activities during peak times for school leaders (i.e., the end of the school year). Further, when engaging with districts New Leaders could advocate for the adoption of supportive models, such as providing substitutes and backup support to participants to allow them to attend their New Leaders activities.

- Participants appreciated the focus of New Leaders on the topic of equity, and experienced changes in their perspectives, mindsets, and approach to practice as a result. School leaders' increased understanding of and use of an equity-lens in their work led to enhanced instructional planning, attention to cultural relevancy in curricular planning, and initiatives to promote greater student- and parent-voice in school decision-making. However, there may be a need for more resources to help school leaders clearly define and convey the concept of equity and what it looks like in practice.

- School leaders perceived some improvements in student outcomes that they attributed to their New Leaders involvement, such as engagement and behavior, but available quantitative evidence was inconclusive. Feedback from many participants suggests that more time is needed for changes to be implemented

and in turn have an impact that can be measured in student assessment or disciplinary practices.

- A major limitation of this study was the lack of data sharing and case study participation on the part of participating school districts, despite multiple concerted efforts by the evaluation team to build working relationships and promote buy-in with district contacts. Future research and evaluation efforts would benefit from more proactive expectation setting with school districts on the part of New Leaders in order to foster greater participation in these areas.

Appendix A

Personal Leadership Self-Assessment for New Leaders Transformational Leadership Framework

New Leaders' Transformational Leadership Framework (TLF) outlines a set of high-leverage actions that school leaders can use to improve their schools. By breaking down these actions, the TLF provides a roadmap to help those in leadership roles build vibrant communities where teachers and students work together to continuously improve their schools so that ALL students achieve at high levels.

The TLF is organized as a set of key levers, each of which is broken down into several indicators. The following self-assessment asks you to assess your own personal leadership skills using this framework. As you reflect on your personal leadership skills, please jot down a few specific examples that illustrate your strengths and growth areas.

Key Lever #1: Belief-based, goal-driven leadership

Leader consistently demonstrates belief in the potential of every student to achieve at high levels.

Indicator	Rating	Notes explaining this rating
Take personal responsibility for the school's outcomes	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Share hope and possibility about the future of the school with staff, parents, and students	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	

Demonstrate the belief that all students can achieve at high levels, and reinforce the belief that effort can improve a student's outcomes	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Demonstrate urgency and commitment to close the achievement gap by supporting all groups of students	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Build a sense of urgency to achieve goals	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Review or change policies or processes that place adult needs over student needs	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Set goals that will push all students toward high levels of achievement	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	

Examples of how you demonstrate leadership in this area and/or areas for growth

Key Lever #2: Equity-focused leadership

Actively address statements of bias, cultural intolerance or prejudice; strive to create an equitable school that celebrates diversity and supports all students

Indicators	Rating	Notes explaining this rating
Explore how power and privilege affect your interactions with others	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Seek out and incorporate diverse perspectives to build an effective organization	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	

Confront biased and/or culturally intolerant statements	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Assess biases and assumptions when making decisions and work to identify blind spots	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Incorporate students', teachers', families', and communities' lives in the school	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Address dynamics of power within the community to foster a pervasive ethos of equity	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Initiate conversations about race, class, sexual orientation, and power	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	

Use moments of conflict as opportunity to strengthen community	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	

Examples of how you demonstrate leadership in this area and/or areas for growth

Key Lever #3: Interpersonal leadership

Leader builds relationships and facilitates active communities of adults and students dedicated to reaching school goals

Indicators	**Rating**	**Notes explaining this rating**
Maintain positive relationships with students, staff, and families	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	

Create trusting relationships among staff, students, and families	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Publicly share clear expectations	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
De-escalate and defuse challenging situations	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Use appropriate facilitation and communication strategies depending on the context or goals	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Facilitate active participation by multiple community members	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	

Honor all voices, and actively involve others in decisions that further the vision of the school	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Build teams that effectively collaborate	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Examples of how you demonstrate leadership in this area and/or areas for growth		
Key Lever #4: Adaptive leadership Help staff, students, and families navigate changes to the school landscape while maintaining focus on the school vision; facilitate experiences that inspire changes in values, beliefs, assumptions, and habits of behavior that do not support success		
Indicators	**Rating**	**Notes explaining this rating**

Recognize emotions including fear, loss, and resistance to change	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Help and support staff to manage the emotions of change successfully while maintaining focus on the vision and goals	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Identify root causes, especially those that require changes in beliefs, values, assumptions, and/or habits of behaviors	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Address deeper challenges involving changing beliefs; skillfully leveraging existing strengths	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Take appropriate risks that will benefit the school, students, or district	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	

Read group dynamics resulting from change and adapt approach accordingly	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	

Examples of how you demonstrate leadership in this area and/or areas for growth

Key Lever #5: Resilient leadership

Demonstrate resolve in the face of adversity and challenge, constantly looking for solutions to move the school closer to its goals and reflecting on personal actions

Indicators	**Rating**	**Notes explaining this rating**
Remain focused on goals in the face of setbacks and challenges	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	

Regulate stress appropriately	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Demonstrate personal resolve and maintain core confidence	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Maintain focus on solutions	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Reflect on performance and seek feedback	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Turn adversity and challenges into opportunities for progress	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	

Pursue opportunities to improve personal leadership	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Honor personal time to sustain school leadership over time	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always	
Examples of how you demonstrate leadership in this area and/or areas for growth		

Appendix B

Leadership Skill Areas and Examples from Survey

Please rate the extent to which your skills in the following ten areas improved as a result of your New Leaders programming.

1. Reflect on personal and equity-focused leadership

Examples may include:

- Determining personal leadership strengths and opportunities
- Identifying and addressing personal and school-based biases that hinder equity
- Consistently engaging in critical self-reflection

2. Vision setting

Examples may include:

- Collaboratively establishing an aligned vision of instructional excellence and equity
- Utilizing the vision to drive the work of the team
- Creating opportunities to recalibrate as a team on the vision

3. Diagnose, prioritize, and action plan

Examples may include:

- Analyzing data from school, student performance, and/or teacher/team practices to diagnose, prioritize, and action plan
- Identifying strategies, naming action steps, and implementing a process to seek feedback
- Implementing, monitoring, and adjusting short-, mid-, and long-cycle action plans

4. Establish an effective, higher performing, collaborative team(s)

Examples may include:

- Setting clearly defined outcomes for meetings and initiatives
- Displaying increased peer-to-peer accountability
- Collaboratively generating solutions and clearly sharing ownership and responsibility

5. Assess the quality of planning and delivery of instruction

Examples may include:

- Identifying high-leverage action steps to improve instructional patterns
- Observing and analyzing classroom instruction for alignment to the Instructional Core, and for the use of equitable, culturally relevant, and accessible content

6. Analyze various forms of data to prioritize, plan, monitor, and adjust

Examples may include:

- Using multiple forms of data for decision-making school-wide
- Leveraging a variety of equity-driven data sources to diagnose, plan, and adjust instructional practices to meet the needs of all students

7. Build and strengthen partnerships

Examples may include:

- Holding regularly scheduled activities and meetings with community members
- Incorporating community and family input into the school's plan for improvement and growth and intentionally seeking out the voices of those who are under-represented

8. Create culturally responsive instructional systems

Examples may include:

- Developing accountability structures for ensuring equitable structures are systemized throughout the school
- Revising school-wide policies that impact instruction to make them equitable and inclusionary

9. Develop and cultivate well-aligned teams

Examples may include:

- Establishing a foundation of trust through care, reliability, and technical and adaptive competence
- Establishing structures and a school culture that fosters effective educator collaboration
- Creating conditions where expertise can be shared and spread across the school

10. Observe, provide effective feedback, and coach

Examples may include:

- Providing timely coaching, support, and feedback for improving teachers' instructional practice
- Analyzing data from a variety of sources including classroom observations, analysis of student work, and student performance data to inform feedback
- Conducting follow-up classroom observations to hold teachers accountable for implementing feedback

Appendix C

Leadership Practices and Examples from Survey

Please rate the extent to which the following five aspects of your leadership practices improved as a result of your New Leaders programming.

1. Belief-based and goal-driven leadership practices

Examples may include:

- Setting high but achievable goals for students
- Focusing decisions on student needs
- Inspiring positivism and possibility
- Holding self and others accountable for outcomes

2. Equity-focused leadership practices

Examples may include:

- Reflecting on personal biases and helping others do the same
- Initiating conversations about equity
- Engaging with diverse stakeholders
- Fostering equity and inclusion

3. Interpersonal leadership practices

Examples may include:

- Being transparent about expectations with all stakeholders
- Facilitating a culture of respect and trust
- Seeking multiple perspectives for strategic action planning

4. Adaptive leadership practices

Examples may include:

- Identifying root causes and adaptive challenges to resolve
- Challenging existing practices, policies, and traditions that do not align with students' needs
- Recognizing and managing emotions that come with change, including resistance, fear, and loss

5. Resilient leadership practices

Examples may include:

- Maintaining confidence in yourself and the school even in the face of adversity
- Reflecting on performance, seeking feedback, and pursuing opportunities to improve personal leadership and the school
- Building professional supports to sustain school leadership over time

Appendix D

Treatment Group	Matched Comparison Group
Vancouver Public Schools	**Spokane School District**
Kent School District	**Bethel School District**
Rural Alliance Treatment Group	**Comparison School Group**
(2019-20 Cohort)	Acme Elementary
Asotin Jr Sr High	Adna Middle/High School
Brewster Elementary School	Almira Coulee Hartline High School
Brewster High School	Bridgeport Aurora High School
Brewster Middle School	Bridgeport Elementary
Chelan Middle School	Bridgeport High School
Columbia High And Elementary	Bridgeport Middle School
Creston Jr-Sr High School	Castle Rock Middle School
Cusick Jr Sr High School	Chimacum Junior/Senior High School
Davenport Senior High School	Colton School
Harrington Elementary School	Concrete Elementary
Highland Middle School	Concrete High School
Inchelium Elementary School	Coulee City Elementary
Jenkins Junior/Senior High	Gess Elementary
Lake Roosevelt Jr/Sr High School	Harbor Junior/Senior High School
Lamont Middle School	Hilton Elementary School
Lind-Ritzville High School	Julius A Wendt Elementary/John C
Mary Walker High School	Thomas Middle School
Northport Elementary School	Leonard M Jennings Elementary
Omak High School	Lopez Middle High School
Pomeroy Jr Sr High School	Lyle High School
Reardan Middle-Senior High School	Lyle Middle School
Selkirk High School	Mabton Jr. Sr. High
Selkirk Middle School	Monte Cristo Elementary
Soap Lake Elementary	Morton Junior-Senior High
Tonasket Elementary School	Mossyrock Jr./Sr. High School
Tonasket Middle School	Mount Baker Junior High
Waterville Elementary	Naches Valley High School
(2020-21 Cohort)	Neah Bay Junior/ Senior High School
Asotin Elementary	Onalaska Middle School
Curlew Elem & High School	Onion Creek Elementary
Davenport Elementary	Orchard Prairie Elementary
Lacrosse Elementary School	Pateros Elementary
Lacrosse High School	Quartzite Learning
Odessa High School	Rosalia Elementary & Secondary School
P C Jantz Elementary	Thorp Elem & Jr Sr High
Roosevelt Elementary	Touchet Elem & High School

Treatment Group	Matched Comparison Group
Warden Middle School	Waitsburg Elementary School
Wellpinit High School	White Pass Jr. Sr. High School
Wellpinit Middle School	Wishkah Valley Elementary/High School
Wilbur Elementary School	Zillah Middle School
(2021-22 Cohort)	
Lind Elementary School	
(2023-24 Cohort)	
Lind-Ritzville Middle School	
Mansfield Elem and High School	
Washtucna Elementary/High School	