

Fall 2023 Update: South Carolina Principal Leadership Network

The South Carolina Principal Leadership Network (SCPLN) is a two-year, cohort-based program established in 2020 to build and accelerate the leadership capacity of at least 150 school leaders from high-need districts in South Carolina. SCPLN, funded by the federal Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant, provides school leaders with evidence-based training, on-site coaching, and networking opportunities via communities of practice (CoPs). As SCPLN nears the completion of the multi-year grant period, this document describes the progress made towards achieving project goals. For information about the project during the first and second year of the grant, see [“Building Capacity Locally: Supporting Principals and School Leaders in South Carolina”](#) and [“Fall 2022 Update: South Carolina Principal Leadership Network”](#) publications.

Goal 1: Create new, sustainable Principal Leadership Networks for 150 school leaders serving in underserved communities over the duration of the grant.

Three cohorts of participants, totaling **171 school leaders** from **78 schools** in **five districts** across the state, have participated in SCPLN over a three-year period. These participants represent a diverse group of school leaders, approximately half (58%) of whom are female and 42% are Black. The leadership experience levels of participants range from 0 to 39 years, with an average of 8 years. About half of the participants work in rural schools, and the remaining half in suburban schools. Additionally, about 70% of students in these schools meet the state’s poverty criteria.

To connect and collaborate with other school leaders, SCPLN participants engage in eight quarterly CoP meetings over a two-year period. The first two cohorts have successfully completed CoPs, with school leaders reporting satisfaction with this experience.

91% of survey respondents were satisfied with their CoP experience.

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“Communicating with other principals is helping me expand my knowledge base and think about how to lead my staff in a different way.”

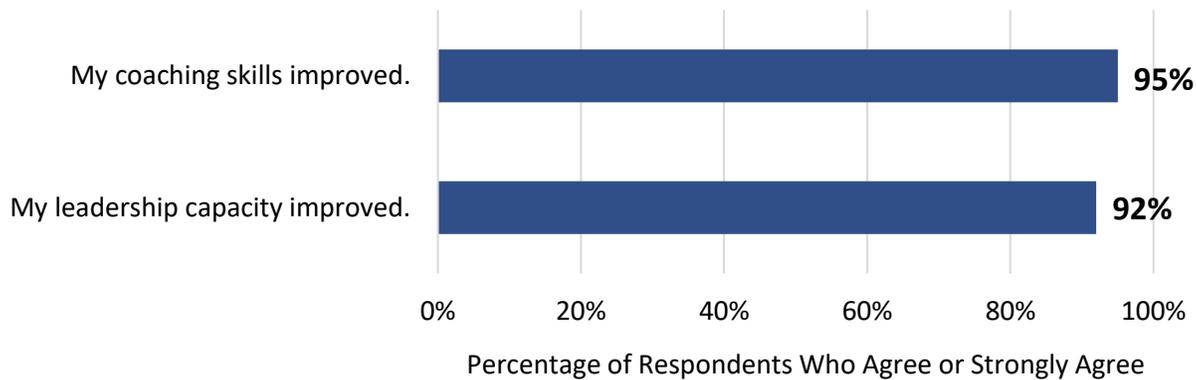
Lewis Compton, SCPLN Participant, Laurens County School District 55



Goal 2: Build instructional leadership capacity of school leaders serving in underserved communities through quarterly virtual training and personalized on-site coaching to support effective leadership practices.

SCPLN school leaders participate in the **Principal Leadership Series training** to grow their capacity as an effective school leader. This multi-day professional learning series is based on the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders and aligned with South Carolina's school leader evaluation. In addition to the training, all participants receive **individualized on-site support** that enables them to hone their instructional leadership skills. All cohorts have successfully completed this training and received at least four on-site support sessions, with school leaders reporting positive impacts of those activities on their leadership and coaching skills.

Figure 1. Survey respondents reported positive impacts of SCPLN activities.



Goal 3: Build the knowledge of school leaders serving in underserved communities in leading and strengthening rigorous programs to improve student outcomes.

To develop or enhance participants' capacity to lead and strengthen rigorous programs to improve student outcomes, SCPLN offers training on developing and strengthening **social-emotional learning (SEL)** and on implementing and strengthening **STEM programs**. All cohorts have successfully completed both trainings and reported positive impacts.

Survey results show an improvement in school leaders' capacity to strengthen programs aimed at developing positive relationships among students.

Additionally, survey results suggest that school leaders have become more confident in their ability to lead STEM programs over the course of SCPLN. The percentage of school leaders who reported being confident or very confident in leading and strengthening STEM programs increased by 23 points from the beginning to the end of SCPLN.

92% of survey respondents indicated their capacity to lead and strengthen programs to develop positive relationships among students improved.

+23 point increase in the percentage of school leaders reporting being confident in leading STEM programs.

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“Our leadership team now has a process to identify and address equity issues, so all students have access to high-quality learning opportunities.”

Jessica Hendricks, SCPLN Participant, School District of Pickens County