SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
Human Resource Directors
Instructional Leaders
Principals

FROM: Kimberly Mack, Director
Office of Leadership Effectiveness

DATE: January 21, 2026

RE: Collective Leadership Initiative, Cohort Nine Request for Nominees

During the 2025–26 school year, the Office of Leadership Effectiveness (OLE) worked with administrators and teacher leaders from twenty-eight schools to implement a cohesive vision for teacher leadership roles within South Carolina's schools. This work helps schools develop a collaborative culture and high-quality professional learning focused on student achievement. This work also supports a key component of teacher retention, creating meaningful opportunities for teachers to lead without leaving the classroom. The South Carolina Department of Education's (SCDE's) Collective Leadership Framework focuses on teacher and administrative (collective) leadership to drive student achievement.

The SCDE seeks school teams of principals and teachers to participate in Cohort Nine of the Collective Leadership Initiative (CLI). Selected school teams will learn and implement the Collective Leadership Framework. More information on desired applicants and the program follows below.

Key outcomes will be to improve student performance through the following:

- effective teaching and data-responsive instructional practices;
- effective collective leadership teams;
- improved perceptions and advancement opportunities within the teaching profession; and
- increased teacher and administrator recruitment and retention.

The Collective Leadership Framework is designed to provide both coherence and local flexibility. Ongoing work will be informed by those schools participating in the initiative; our partnership will provide continuing data for testing the effectiveness of the Collective Leadership Framework. If you or your principals are interested in learning more about CLI, click here to view information about this initiative.

The SCDE is seeking up to twelve schools for the 2026–27 school year to implement the collective leadership framework. Professional development and technical assistance will be provided throughout the upcoming school year. Commitment to participate in this initiative includes the following:

- Commitment to a site visit at your school for all staff members to participate in an "Introduction to CLI" workshop;
- Release time in the day for the teacher leader(s) to serve in a collective leadership role (Note: "hybrid" roles for teacher leaders may be different across our state; the teacher should be directly instructing students part of day and released to serve other educators part of the day);
- Up to five sessions (in person, virtual, or hybrid) in 2026–27 with the OLE;
- One individual school coaching conversation per semester
- Participation in Seven Conditions for Effective Leadership Survey; and
- Commitment to shape and sustain the Collective Leadership Framework for your unique school setting for a minimum of two years (Note: the OLE will provide on-going support beyond the 2026-27 initial year for your cohort

If you or your principals would like to participate, please click here to complete the application survey. Applications must be completed by March 6, 2026.If you have any questions, please contact Crystal Halma, chalma@ed.sc.gov.