

LEAD4CHANGE®

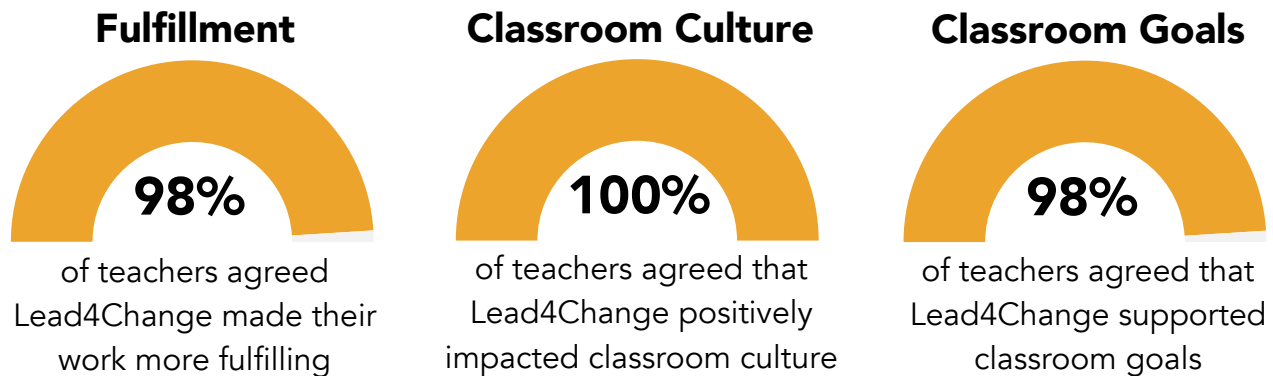
The Impact of Lead4Change: Measuring Its Effect on Youth Leadership Development

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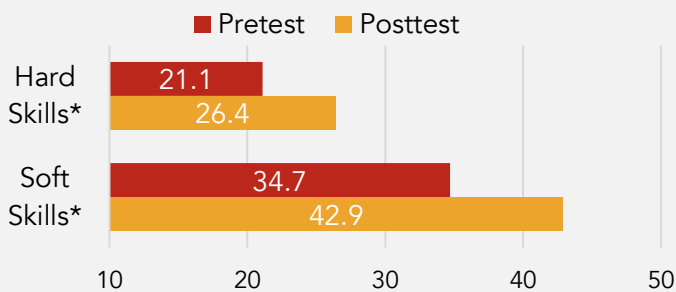


SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Lead4Change is a leadership and project-based learning program for students in grades 6–12. The current study used pretest and posttest responses to evaluate the Lead4Change Core Curriculum. The purpose of this report is to share the findings and provide a clearer understanding of the program’s impact on students.



Overall Leadership Skills



74% of Students Improved Their Leadership Hard and Soft Skills

*Results showed a statistically significant increase in scores, indicating improved leadership skills after Lead4Change.

Measurable Growth in Leadership Hard Skills:

65% of students improved in action planning, 63% in project management, and 56% in goal setting, etc. 72% of students improved in problem-solving, 68% in adaptability, and 61% in teamwork/collaboration, etc.

% of Teachers Who Agreed Lead4Change Improved:



In summary, educators reported high levels of satisfaction with the Lead4Change Core Curriculum. Increases in student leadership skills were observed across all subscales, with 74% of students showing improvement. Additionally, 97% of teachers indicated that the program was simple to implement and that they would likely participate again. These results highlight Lead4Change’s effectiveness in building student leadership while offering a meaningful experience for educators.

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT LEAD4CHANGE

The Lead4Change program is a free, research-backed, project-based learning program for students in grades 6–12. It offers easy-to-implement, lesson plans that guide students to identify community needs, set goals, develop solutions, and carry out impactful service projects. Serving over 1.8 million students and 12,000 educators since 2012, Lead4Change has been shown to boost leadership skills, self-efficacy, teamwork, respect, ambition, and innovation. Educators benefit from turnkey curriculum materials, integration guides, and a supportive fellowship program, making it a flexible choice for classrooms, clubs, and virtual learning environments.

WHY LEAD4CHANGE?

Young people often have the desire to make a difference but lack the structured tools, confidence, and leadership experience to turn ideas into action. At the same time, schools and communities need opportunities that build essential life skills—such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and goal setting—beyond traditional academics. The Lead4Change program addresses this gap by providing a practical, engaging leadership and service-learning curriculum

CURRENT RESEARCH ON YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Introducing leadership development during adolescence is a critical timeframe for developing skills such as communication, social responsibility, self-awareness, and self-confidence.¹ Leadership experiences in middle and high school have been linked to increased academic engagement, self-confidence and a boost in peer relationships.^{2, 3} Longitudinal research also indicates that early leadership development contributes to higher likelihood of taking on leadership roles in adulthood, as well as improved academic and psychosocial outcomes during adolescence.^{4, 5}

Lead4Change empowers students to build leadership skills, set goals, and work together to create meaningful change in their schools and communities. Through projects, students develop confidence, strengthen teamwork and problem-solving abilities, and learn to align their actions with personal values to make an impact.

The purpose of this report is to share the findings from the Lead4Change Core Curriculum to gain a clearer understanding of its impact on students.

METHODS

EDUCATOR PARTICIPANTS

A total of 103 educators completed the Lead4Change Core Curriculum. The current study used a pretest and posttest design, with 99 educators completing the pretest and 58 completing the posttest. Of these, 54 provided matched responses, which will serve as the basis for data analysis.

INSTRUMENTS

The survey instrument assessed leadership hard skills, leadership soft skills, students' experiences, and program satisfaction. Demographic items were included.

Leadership Skills Scale: This scale was developed specifically for this study to assess both hard and soft leadership skills. The Hard Skills component includes goal setting, decision making, project management, event planning, marketing and promotion, and action planning. The Soft Skills component includes teamwork and collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking, adaptability, resilience, empathy and citizenship, conflict resolution, open-mindedness, and self-awareness. The scale consists of seven items measuring hard skills and eleven items measuring soft skills. A Principal Axis Factor Analysis was conducted to examine the structure of the scale, with items loading appropriately onto their respective factors. The analysis confirmed a two-factor structure, resulting in a 7-item Hard Skills factor and an 11-item Soft Skills factor. Both the Leadership Hard Skills factor ($\alpha = .91$) and Soft Skills factor ($\alpha = .92$) demonstrated strong internal consistency. A Likert of 1-Not At All to 5-A Lot was used.

The **Student Experiences** measure assesses students' respectful interactions, belief in their ability to create change, empowerment to address meaningful issues, use of goal-setting strategies, and motivation to pursue goals. A Likert of 1-Strongly Disagree to 6-Strongly Agree was used.

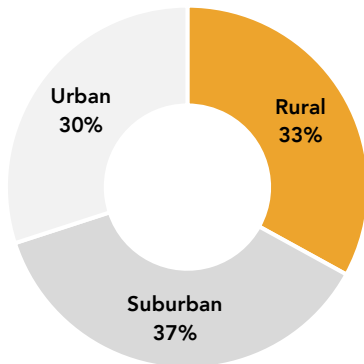
The **Program Satisfaction** measure assesses teachers' perceptions of Lead4Change's ease of implementation, impact on classroom culture, student motivation and engagement, and overall satisfaction with the program, including its alignment with classroom goals and support from instructional coaches. A Likert of 1-Strongly Disagree to 6-Strongly Agree was used.

The current program involved analysis of data from the Lead4Change Core Curriculum. Both frequency and statistical analyses were used to examine the findings.

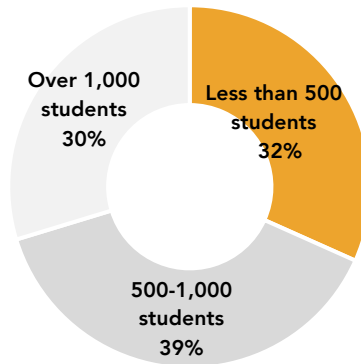
DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic information for the 54 educators is presented below. The demographic characteristics of participants reflected those of the schools served, suggesting a representative sample.

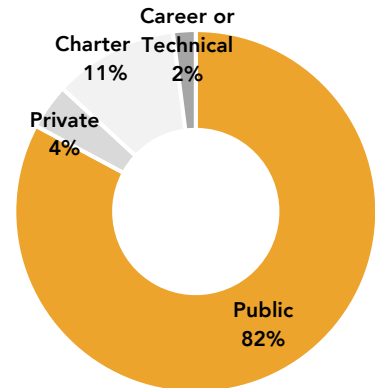
Location



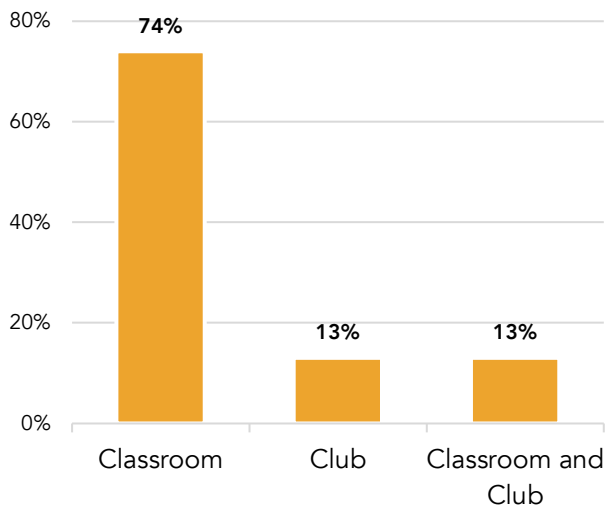
School Size



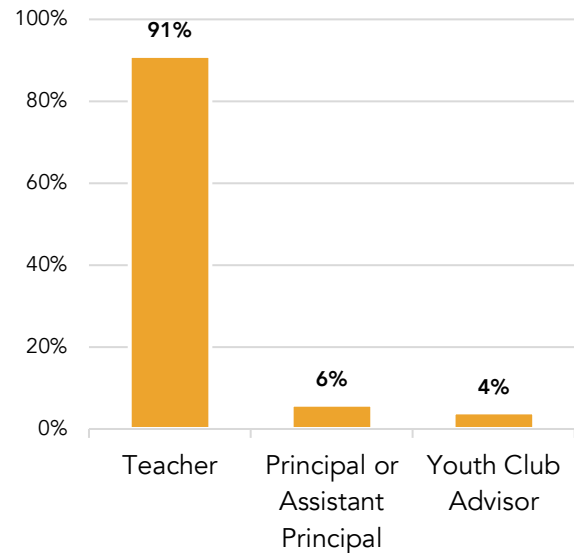
School Type



Setting



Educator Role



56% are at a Title 1 School

26% serve Middle School
62% serve High School

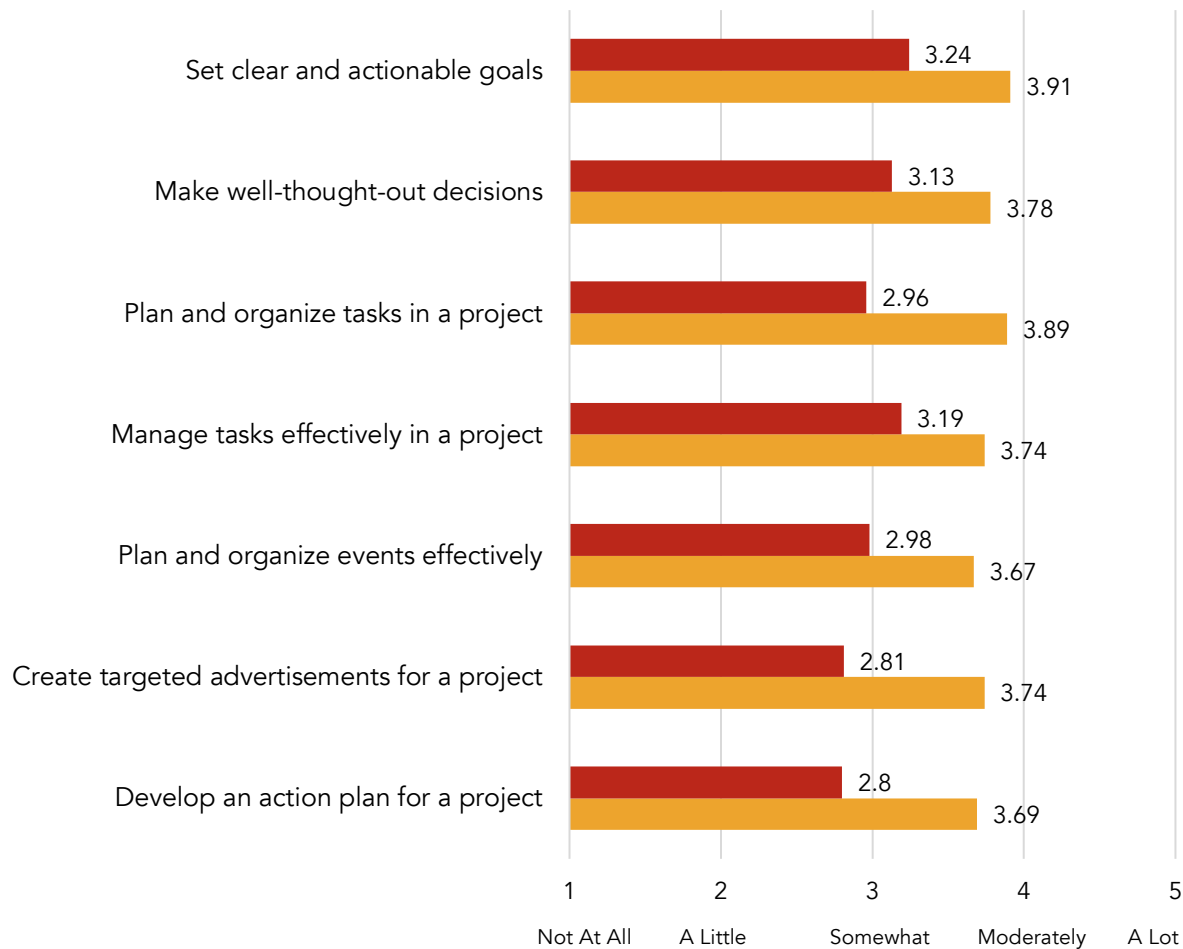
RESULTS

The following graphs illustrate educator feedback on leadership hard skills, leadership soft skills, student experiences, and program satisfaction.

Leadership Hard Skills

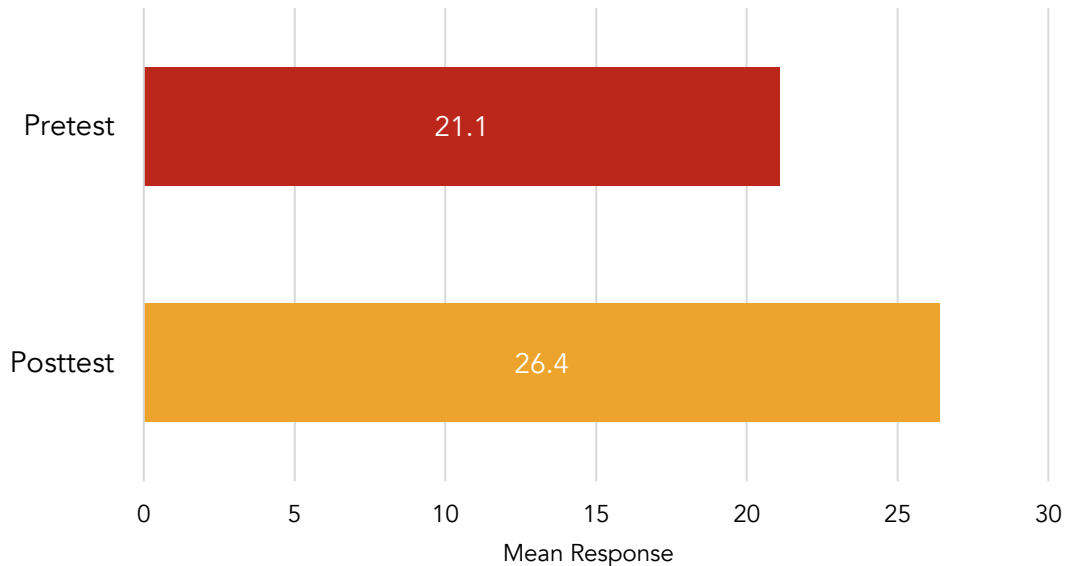
■ Pretest ■ Posttest

Evaluate your students effectiveness in the following areas:



The chart above illustrates responses to the **Leadership Hard Skills** scale, which assesses students' abilities in goal setting, decision making, project management, event planning, marketing and promotion, and action planning. All items showed an increase from pretest to posttest, with statistically significant improvements based on paired samples t-tests. **This means that students developed stronger, practical leadership hard skills after participating in the Lead4Change Core Curriculum.**

Overall Leadership Hard Skills

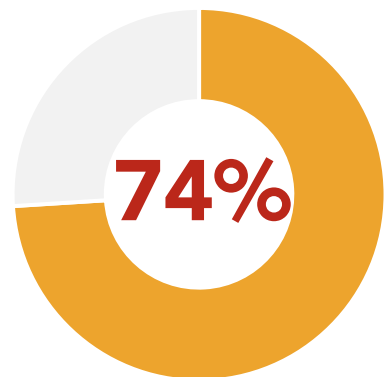


Leadership Hard Skills = Goal Setting, Decision Making, Project Management, Event Planning, Marketing and Promotion, and Create an Action Plan

The chart above shows the average scores on the **Leadership Hard Skills** total scale. A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare scores before and after participating in the Lead4Change Core Curriculum. Results revealed a statistically significant increase in scores from pretest to posttest [$t(53) = -7.613, p < .001$]. **Overall, the total scale score improved by 25%, reflecting a meaningful increase in students' leadership skills after completing the program.**

Additionally, 74% of students showed individual improvement in their Leadership Hard Skills.

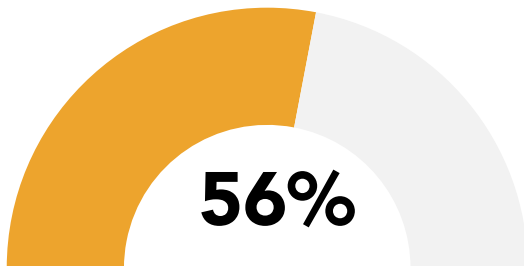
Overall, the findings indicate that the program effectively strengthened students' Leadership Hard Skills.



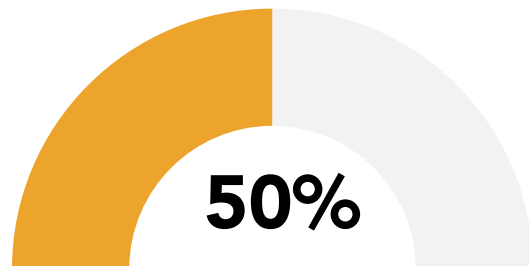
Leadership Hard Skills: Measurable Improvement

The graphs below display the percentage of students who showed improvement in hard skills. The greatest gains were seen in marketing (67%), creating an action plan (65%), and project management (63%).

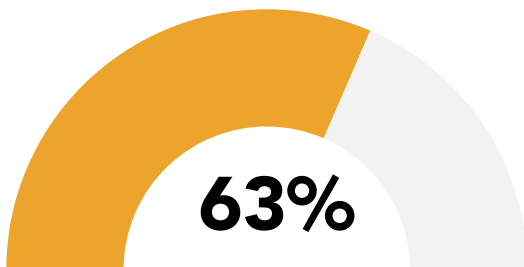
Goal Setting



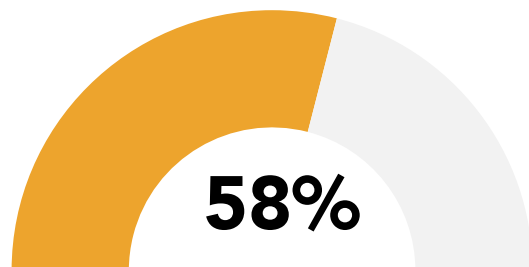
Decision Making



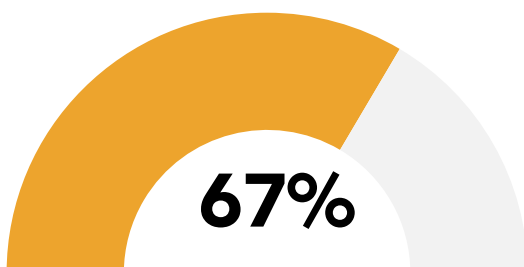
Project Management



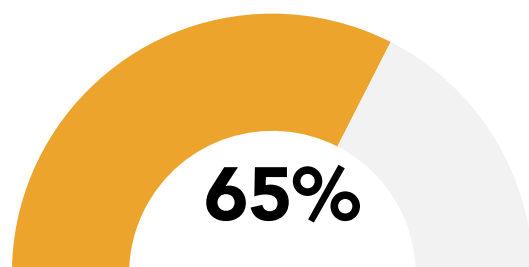
Event Planning



Marketing



Creating an Action Plan



Leadership Soft Skills

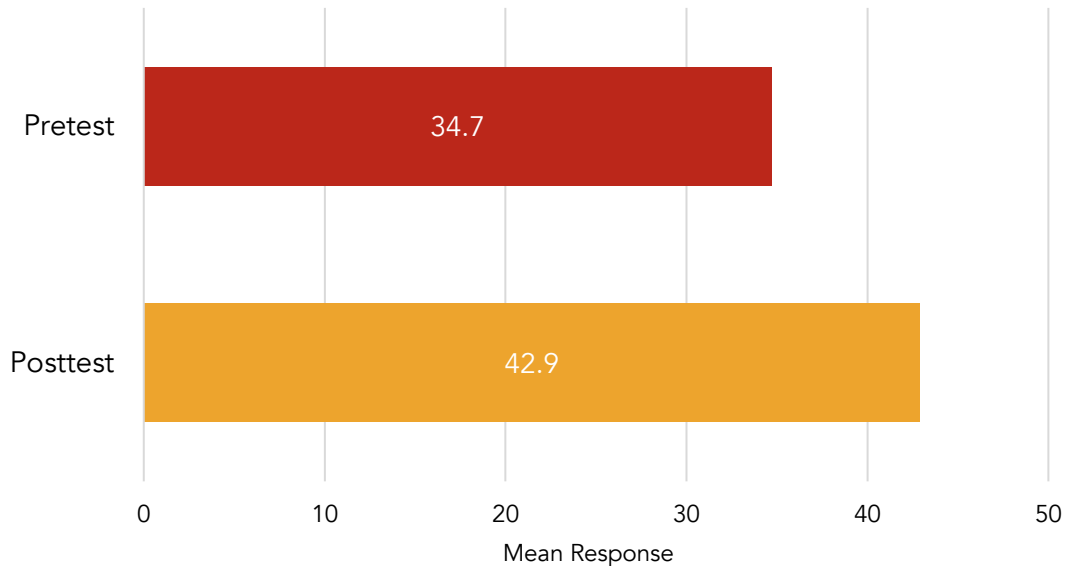
■ Pretest ■ Posttest

Evaluate your students effectiveness in the following areas:



The chart above illustrates responses to the **Leadership Soft Skills** scale, which assesses students' abilities in teamwork and collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking, adaptability, resilience, empathy and citizenship, conflict resolution, open-mindedness, and self-awareness. All items showed an increase from pretest to posttest, with statistically significant improvements based on paired samples t-tests. **This means that students developed stronger, practical leadership soft skills after participating in the Lead4Change Core Curriculum.**

Overall Leadership Soft Skills

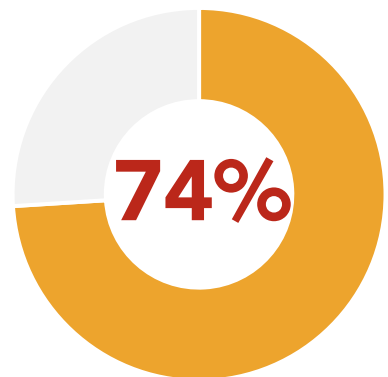


Leadership Soft Skills = Teamwork and Collaboration, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Adaptability, Resilience, Empathy and Citizenship, Conflict Resolution, Open-Mindedness, and Self-Awareness

The chart above shows the average scores on the **Leadership Soft Skills** total scale. A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare scores before and after participating in the Lead4Change Core Curriculum. Results revealed a statistically significant increase in scores from pretest to posttest [$t(53) = -7.480, p < .001$]. **On average, the total scale score improved by 24%, reflecting a meaningful increase in students' leadership skills after completing the program.**

Additionally, 74% of students showed individual improvement in their Leadership Soft Skills.

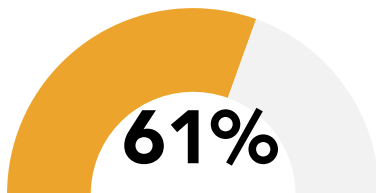
Overall, the findings indicate that the program effectively strengthened students' Leadership Soft Skills.



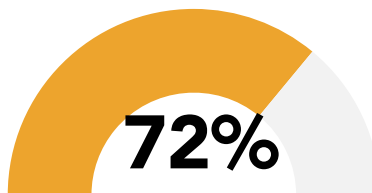
Leadership Soft Skills: Measurable Improvement

The graphs below display the percentage of students who showed improvement in soft skills. The greatest gains were seen in problem-solving (72%), adaptability (68%), teamwork and collaboration (61%), resilience (61%), and self-awareness (61%).

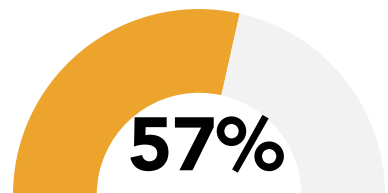
Teamwork & Collaboration



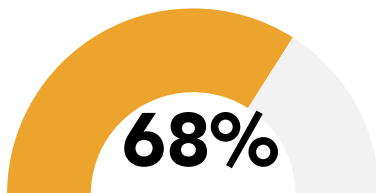
Problem-Solving



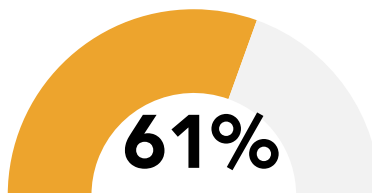
Critical Thinking



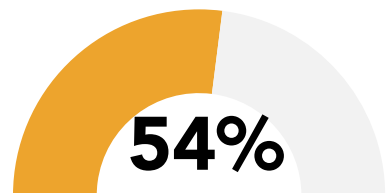
Adaptability



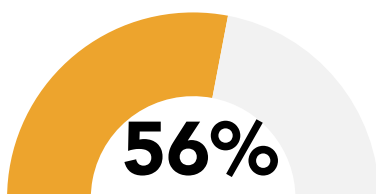
Resilience



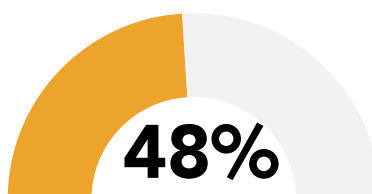
Empathy and Citizenship



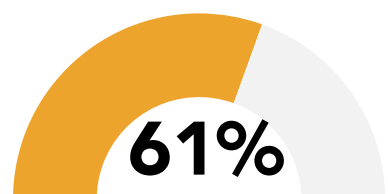
Conflict Resolution



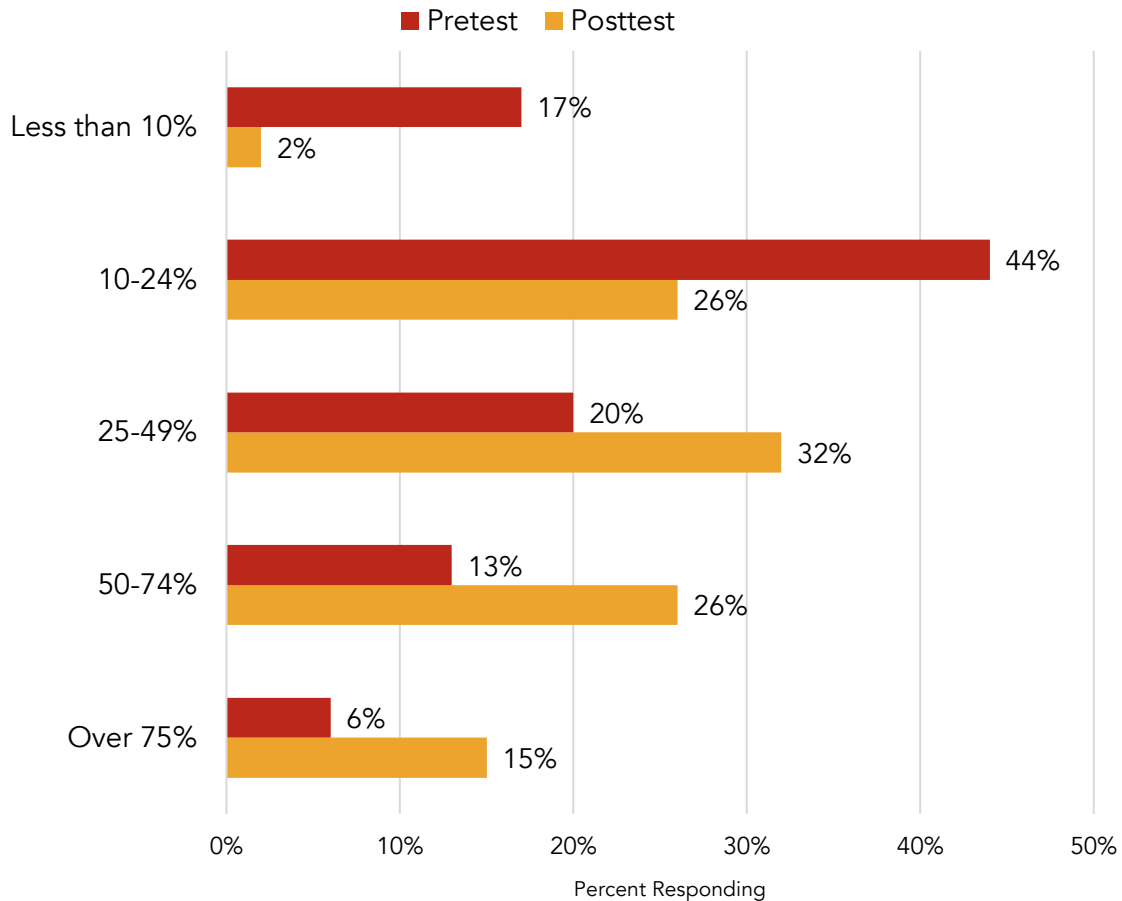
Open Mindedness



Self-Awareness



Percent of Student Who Are Leaders in the Classroom

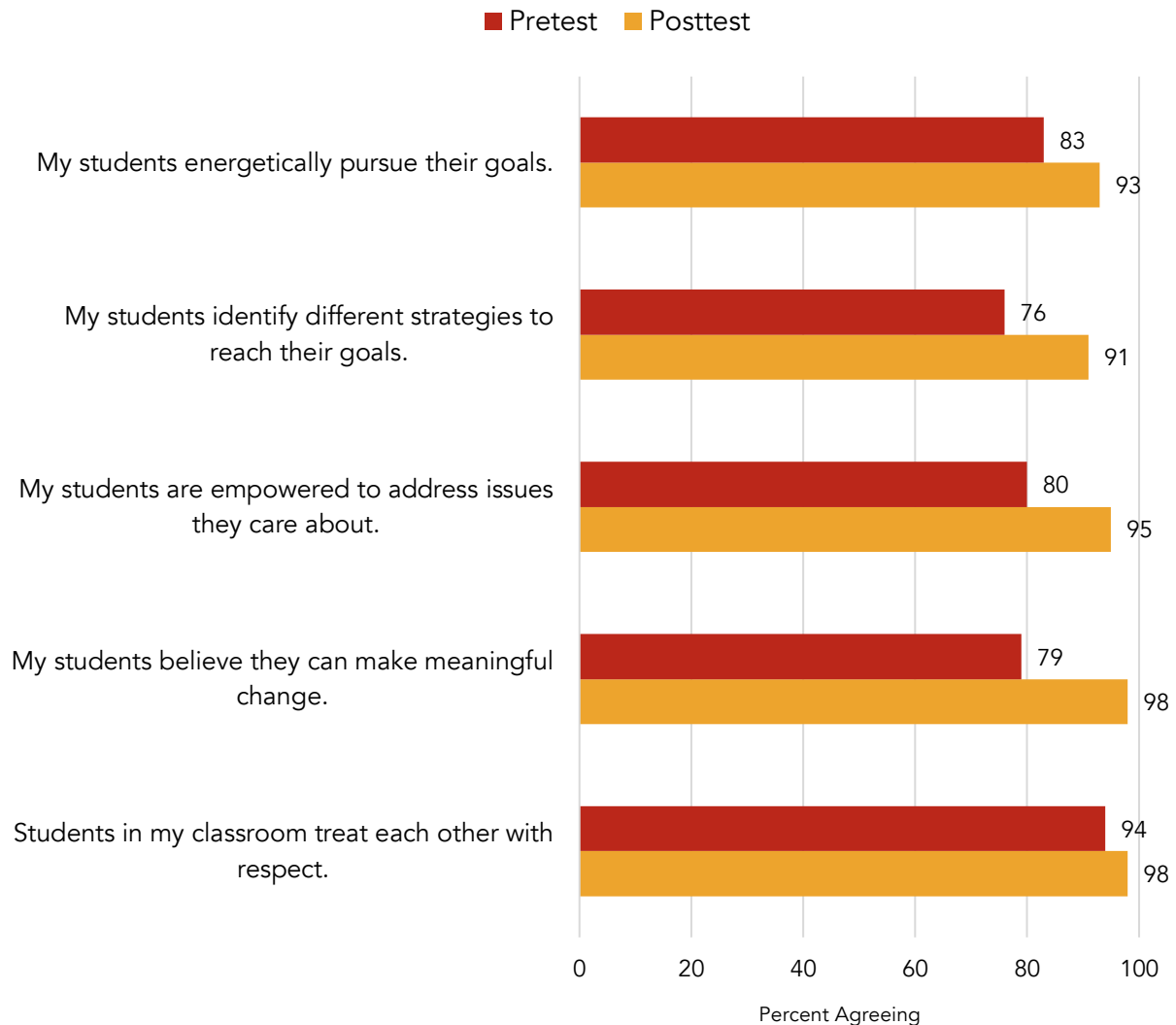


The graph above illustrates the percentage of student leaders in the classroom.

Educators reported a significant increase in the percentage of student leaders within their classrooms. The most significant improvements were seen among those reporting high levels of student leadership. Specifically, the percentage of classrooms with over 75% student leaders more than doubled, rising from 6% at pretest to 15% at posttest. Classrooms reporting 50–74% student leaders also increased from 13% to 26%.

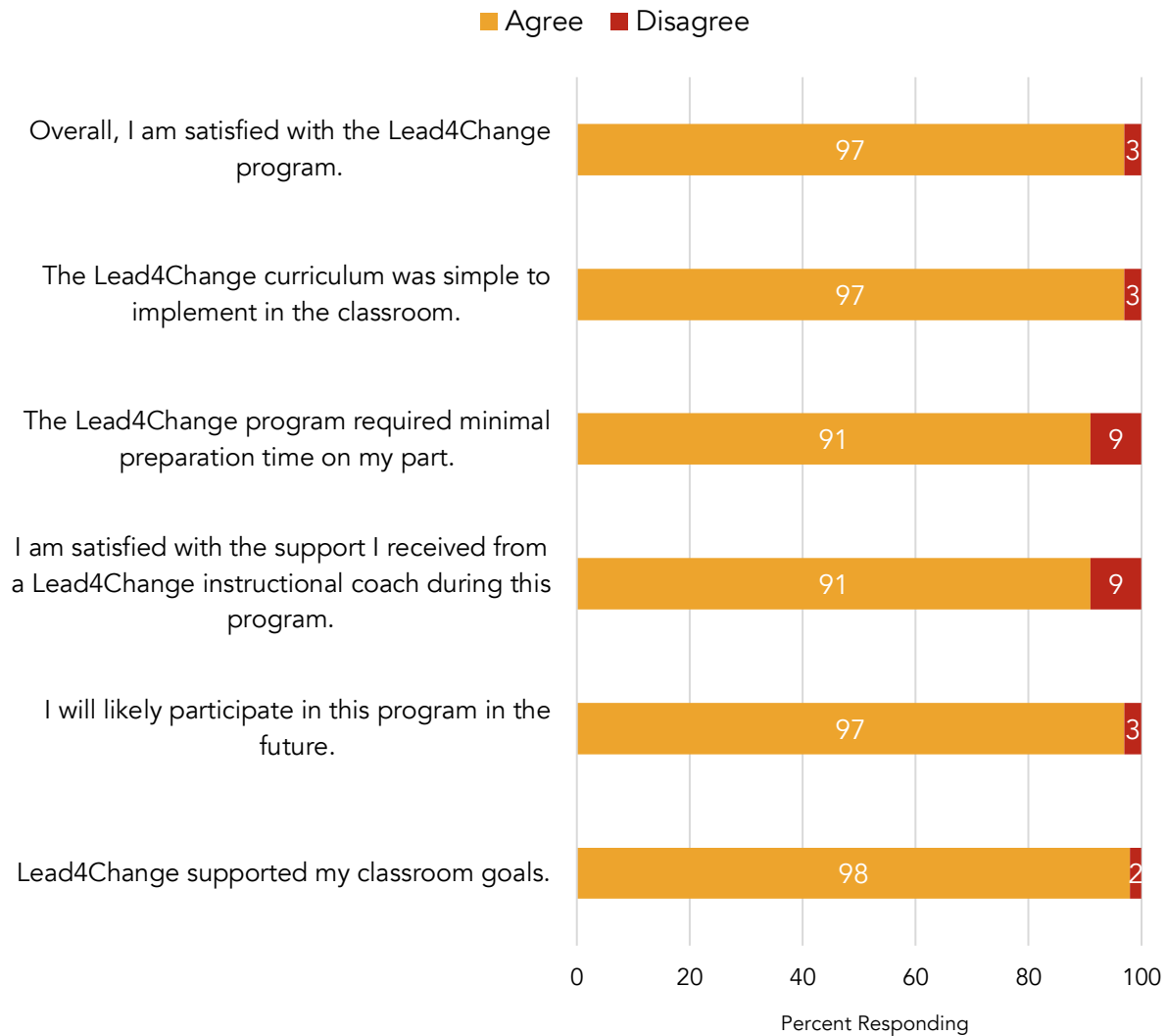
At the same time, fewer classrooms reported lower percentages of student leaders. Classrooms with less than 25% student leaders decreased notably from 61% at pretest to just 28% at posttest, demonstrating a meaningful shift toward greater leadership engagement among students following program participation.

Student Experiences



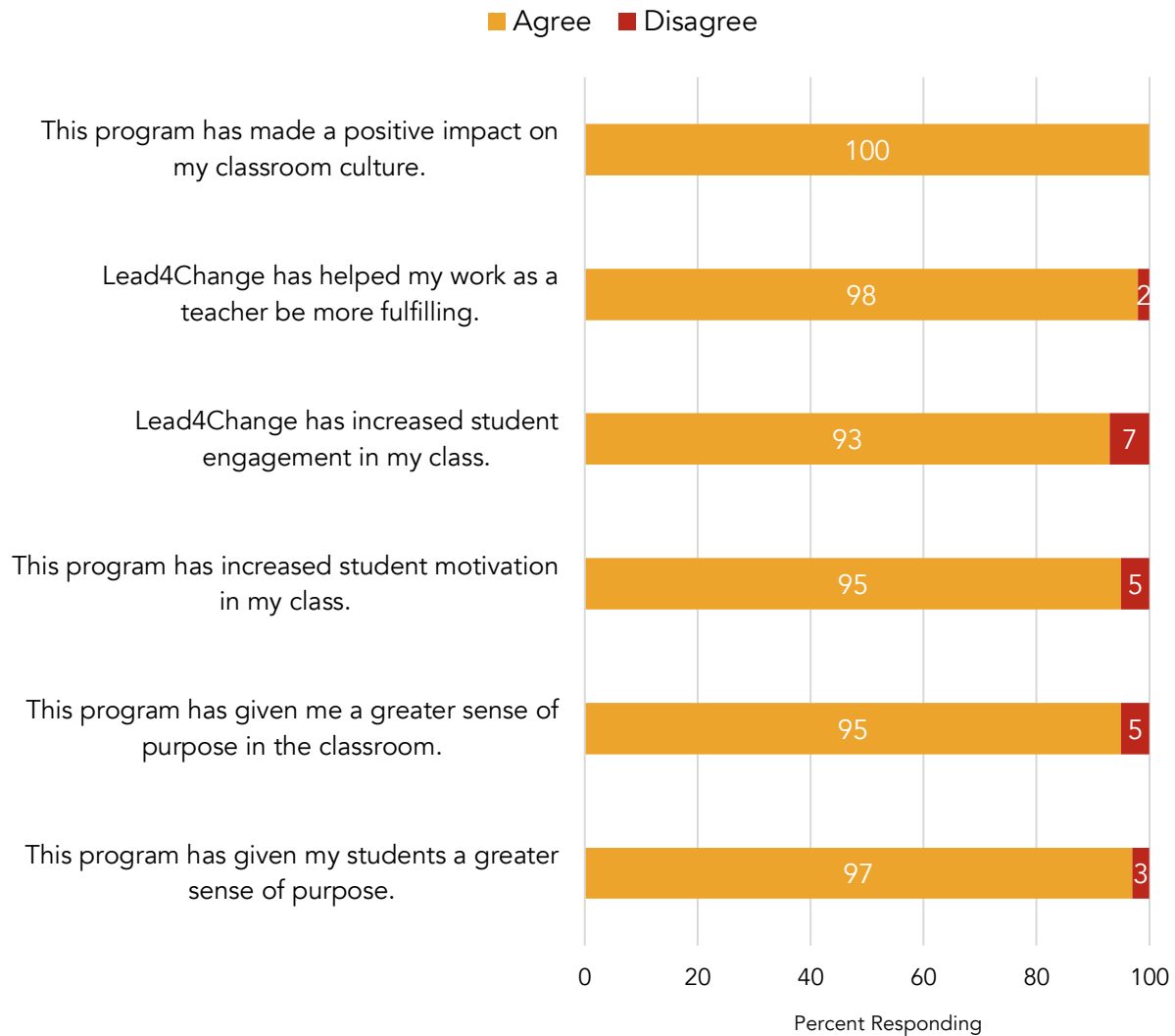
The chart above illustrates the percentage of educators agreeing with items on the **Student Experiences** scale. All items showed an increase from pretest to posttest, with statistically significant improvements based on paired samples t-tests. Notably, the percentage of educators reporting that students believe they can make meaningful change increased from 79% to 98%. Similarly, gains were observed in students feeling empowered to address issues they care about (80% to 95%) and in their ability to identify strategies to reach their goals (76% to 91%). These findings indicate positive changes in classroom climate and student empowerment following the program.

Program Satisfaction



The chart above displays responses to the **Program Satisfaction** questions. Educators reported overwhelmingly positive experiences with the Lead4Change Core Curriculum. Nearly all respondents (98%) agreed that the program supported their classroom goals, and 97% indicated they are likely to participate again. High satisfaction rates were also reported regarding program simplicity and implementation, with 97% agreeing that the curriculum was easy to use. Overall, 97% of educators expressed satisfaction with the program.

Program Satisfaction



The chart above presents results from the **Program Satisfaction** items. 100% of educators agreed that Lead4Change made a positive impact on their classroom culture. Nearly all respondents (97%) agreed the program gave their students a greater sense of purpose, while 95% reported experiencing a greater sense of purpose in their own teaching. The program also enhanced educators' professional fulfillment, with 98% agreeing it made their work more rewarding.

CONCLUSION

The Lead4Change Core Curriculum demonstrated clear, measurable success in strengthening student leadership skills, increasing student engagement, and providing educators with a simple, impactful tool to support their classrooms.

KEY FINDINGS

Leadership Hard Skills:

- Total scale score improved by 25% following program participation.
- 74% of students showed individual growth in Leadership Hard Skills.
- Greatest gains were seen in marketing (67%), action planning (65%), and project management (63%).

Leadership Soft Skills:

- Total scale score improved by 24% after the program.
- 74% of students showed individual growth in Leadership Soft Skills.
- Most significant gains were in problem-solving (72%), adaptability (68%), teamwork and collaboration (61%), resilience (61%), and self-awareness (61%).

Increase in Student Leaders:

- Classrooms with over 75% student leaders more than doubled (from 6% to 15%).
- Classrooms with 50–74% student leaders also increased (from 13% to 26%).
- Classrooms with fewer than 25% student leaders decreased substantially (from 61% to 28%).

Educator Satisfaction:

- 98% said the program supported classroom goals.
- 97% agreed the curriculum was simple to implement.
- 97% expressed overall satisfaction with the program.

Positive Impact on Classroom:

- 100% agreed the program positively impacted classroom culture.
- 97% reported it gave students a greater sense of purpose.
- 98% agreed it made their work as educators more fulfilling.

The Lead4Change Core Curriculum effectively builds both hard and soft leadership skills, boosts student engagement, increases the number of student leaders, and enhances classroom culture. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from educators further reinforces the program's value as a practical, easy-to-implement tool for empowering students and strengthening leadership development.

References

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