

PERFORMANCE-BASED COMPENSATION: Design and Implementation at Six Teacher Incentive Fund Sites

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INTRODUCTION

With the enactment of the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) in 2006, the federal government initiated an effort to support innovative approaches that compensate teachers and principals based on effectiveness. Across the country, 33 TIF grantees are implementing performance based compensation systems in a variety of ways. The federal government is in the process of setting up a national evaluation of TIF, and local evaluations are underway.

Through an analysis of the 33 TIF sites, six sites that had promising preliminary data were selected to study. This report is a qualitative look at the design and implementation of these six projects and their early results with a primary focus on implementation. Through interviews, focus groups, data analysis, and site-based observations, practitioners involved in these projects describe the importance of performance based incentives; the need to align incentives, supports, evaluation, and advancement to accountability; the impact of incentives on recruitment and retention of effective educators at high-need schools; and improvement in student learning and school cultures. Given the growing but still limited body of research around teacher and principal compensation reform, the stories of these successful sites reveal important lessons.

Although only in their third or fourth years of implementation, these sites have preliminary indicators showing increased student achievement, wide stakeholder support, improvements in recruitment and retention, and positive changes in school cultures. They are:

- » National Institute for Excellence in Teaching—TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement, Consortium of Algiers Charter Schools, New Orleans, LA
- » Amphitheater Unified School District #10, AZ—Project EXCELL!
- » Guilford County Schools, NC—Mission Possible
- » School District of Philadelphia, PA, Charter Schools (Philly TAP)
- » South Carolina Department of Education and Florence County School District Three, SC—TAP
- » University of Texas System (Texas TAP)

Although the design and implementation of programs differ, an analysis of sites reveals striking similarities (see Appendix A). In addition to similarities in design and implementation, several larger themes emerged from interviews and observations with over 100 key personnel at these sites and through data and document analysis. This paper first outlines the common themes identified by the author, followed by a brief summary of each of the TIF sites. The bulk of the qualitative findings and analysis occurs in the case studies of each site.

Common Themes

While research is nascent on how best to align compensation with teacher and principal effectiveness and will require further experimentation and evaluation, the themes in this paper have also emerged in the research on supports and compensation for educators. We know that the quality of the teacher is the single most important school-level factor impacting student learning. Teacher quality has a tremendous effect on student achievement and this effect varies widely. Effective principals are vital for identifying and supporting effective teachers. We know that aligning resources to prioritize student outcomes can improve student and teacher learning. Teacher involvement in the design and implementation of performance-based compensation systems improves implementation, and well-implemented performance-pay plans can improve the school climate and collaboration. Bonuses can be highly motivational for goal achievement; however, this motivation could be hindered by a lack of careful planning, design, and administration.¹

Effective implementation will require widespread experimentation that is flexible; is influenced by people in and near the classroom; maintains an intense focus on results, alignment, and external evaluation; secures stable and adequate funding; and is a component of competitive total compensation. If the change in compensation is clearly designed, articulated, and implemented, the revised structure has the potential to improve the teaching profession through two avenues: compositional and behavioral.²

The themes that emerged from the six sites are:

THEME 1

Performance compensation is most effective when integrated with professional development, collaboration, and evaluation as a comprehensive approach to system-wide improvement. The educators at these sites confirm the research including: the need for job-embedded professional development, multiple career paths, robust evaluation, and differentiated compensation.³ This comprehensive design relies on multiple measures of teacher and principal effectiveness. Nearly all of these sites move beyond traditional teacher evaluation by using multiple observers with instructional expertise to evaluate teachers and analyze student work. Coupled with value-added measures of student academic growth, these detailed observations and analyses of student work provide credible evidence of teaching effectiveness and a roadmap for improvements in instruction.

Teachers felt that the models in these sites included significant teacher support. Across almost all of the schools, teachers felt that their buildings were more collaborative and collegial since the implementation of the TIF grants. The notable exception was Guilford County where not all of the teachers can earn bonuses. However, teachers in Guilford County who are experiencing differentiated compensation in addition to the other three pieces are demonstrating student achievement growth and professional satisfaction.

In the coming years, as these comprehensive efforts are sustained, labor market sorting could significantly alter the compositional make-up of the schools at these sites. Certain types of teachers that are interested in robust evaluation, professional development, career advancement, and differentiated pay based on their effectiveness would seemingly be more likely to work in these types of schools.⁴

Example: The Algiers Charter Schools Association in New Orleans adopted a comprehensive school reform, the TAP system, as the basis for its approach to professional development, teacher compensation, and growth. While inclusive of performance based compensation and rigorous evaluation, Algiers positioned TAP as the structure for professional development in its schools by incorporating it into school charters.

THEME 2

Wide stakeholder involvement is essential to the design, implementation, and effectiveness of compensation reform efforts.⁵ At most sites this included teachers, principals, district administrators, district staff, and in some cases, community members. It also involved significant communication and stakeholder involvement up front, as well as on a regular basis once the program was in place. In order to build the credibility and strength of any model, tapping into the expertise of a wide audience is essential. This is especially true of stakeholders who will be the primary ones implementing change – teachers and principals.

Additionally, community members, including school board members whose fiscal support is necessary, need to be communicated with in a transparent and consistent manner. Even in difficult economic and budget times, participants are finding that paying and supporting teachers differently resonates with community members.

Example: Amphitheater Unified invited teachers and principals to collaborate on the development and implementation of Project EXCELL! More than 120 teachers and principals participated, which created wide stakeholder support from the first days of the project.

THEME 3

Financial incentives reward additional work and success, but are valued as a component of a broader emphasis on improving teaching and learning. While incentives alone may not improve teaching and learning, they should not be mistaken as irrelevant or unnecessary. Teachers and principals at these sites agree that to be effective, performance incentives must be accompanied by systems that support improvement. Financial incentives that support the technical core of an organization, in this case teaching and learning, help reorient the direction of that organization and focus attention on instructional goals. The incentives in five of the six sites are aligned to school-wide measures as well, increasing the likelihood of collaboration.

Repeatedly, key personnel reiterated that their model only worked because their approach was about more than teachers making more money. In two of six sites, teachers and program directors believed that the performance incentives were not large enough to really make a difference on their own, as the incentives were less than 5% of compensation. While researchers suggest that there is not ample evidence to determine the optimal incentive amount,⁶ there is general consensus that the amount needs to be meaningful, approximately 5% or more of total compensation and possibly significantly more in high-needs schools.⁷ However, even smaller incentives were appreciated as a component of a more comprehensive effort to support teachers. Moreover, in five of the six sites, teachers could make 15-20% more if they took on roles as master, mentor, or other instructional leadership positions.

Example: Guilford County teachers that are eligible for performance-based pay cite professional development that supports them in understanding and acting on student growth data as one of the primary reasons for the success of the program.

THEME 4

Nearly all of the sites created teacher leader positions with significant additional compensation to provide school-based support, evaluation, and oversight for instructional improvement.

Selecting the right people for leadership positions is necessary for building a working environment that fosters growth and high standards. Strong principals working with effective teacher leaders are essential.⁸ The teacher leaders must have proven records of success in working with students and also must be able to communicate well with other teachers. By comprehensively addressing teaching effectiveness through multiple evaluations by multiple evaluators and value-added calculations, these sites are identifying potential leaders using multiple measures of effectiveness. Success also requires strong principals working to maximize the impact of teacher leaders who have a proven record of success in working with students and coaching other teachers.

Example: In the TIF-funded charter schools in Philadelphia, the most effective teachers are selected to fill the master and mentor teacher roles. In this capacity, they provide professional development and conduct classroom observations of other teachers in the school. Master and mentor teachers receive additional pay for their expanded set of responsibilities.

THEME 5

Success in implementing these challenging reforms with fidelity is enhanced when states and districts provide staff positions, offer programmatic support and tie local efforts to state policies and funding.

Sites that are supported by state-level structures—including support for school selection, leadership team training, technical assistance, communications, monitoring and oversight—have enhanced flexibility in resource allocation and an increased opportunity to share successful practices and influence state policy. Sites without significant state support are dependent on strong district leadership working creatively with or around the state.

Example: South Carolina’s project leaders are closely connected to the state department of education. These ties facilitate state approval of the TAP evaluation in place of the state required evaluation, integration of elements of the TAP teacher and principal evaluation system into the state evaluation systems, and integration of aspects of the TAP professional development model into the state’s new teacher mentoring and growth strategies. These linkages allowed the reform to be implemented with fidelity and increase the likelihood of its being sustained over time.

THEME 6

Financial sustainability is enhanced when state and district funds are reallocated to support performance compensation reforms.

All six sites have committed significant funds to support these reforms, yet are still looking to the federal government to continue initiatives to broaden the understanding around how best to support and compensate teachers and principals based on effectiveness. The breadth and depth of stakeholder support for making the difficult choices necessary to rethink how teachers and principals are supported and compensated is also important in building long term sustainability. From re-purposing district and administrative positions to reallocating federal, state, and local funding (including Title I and Title II funds), the reallocation of resources demonstrates district commitment to the sustainability of performance compensation reform.

Example: The Texas TIF grant’s unique partnership between schools, districts, the University of Texas, and the Texas Educational Agency has created strong support from external stakeholders, who are committed to the longevity of the reform. For example, state funding for performance pay through the District Awards for Teaching Excellence program is used to support Texas TAP schools.

SUMMARY OF SIX TIF SITES

National Institute for Excellence in Teaching - TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement, Consortium of Algiers Charter Schools, New Orleans, LA

In the wake of the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina, the Algiers Charter Schools Association (ACSA) opened its doors on December 15, 2005 in the West Bank area of New Orleans. The ACSA mission is to “prepare every school and every teacher to teach every child so that all will learn.” The ACSA schools partnered with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) to implement TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement. TAP is a comprehensive system of evaluation, professional development, career advancement, and performance-based compensation. TAP is ACSA’s primary driver for improving teacher effectiveness and growth in student achievement, and as such, is incorporated into each school’s charter.

ACSA’s students and teachers have benefited from the implementation of TAP. Of the eight out of nine schools with enough data, seven schools made significantly more than one year of academic growth in 2008-2009 and one school made a year of academic growth. In the year prior to Katrina, the teacher attrition rate at the schools the ACSA took over was nearly 40%; however, the attrition rate has fallen to 7%. Recognizing ACSA’s student achievement growth, NIET presented the association with the prestigious TAP Award of Distinction in 2010.

ACSA has been committed to ensuring the sustainability of its performance-based compensation system. Even before receiving federal dollars through NIET’s TIF grant, ACSA had committed to TAP by including TAP in each school’s charter. Further, the Algiers schools are nine of over 40 schools in Louisiana that are implementing TAP. As such, there is a state TAP support structure within the Louisiana Department of Education that is also working to assist the schools in developing a long-term sustainability plan. ACSA leadership has reallocated state and federal funds to support TAP implementation, including Title I, Title II, state tobacco settlement money, and state grants.

Amphitheater Unified School District #10, AZ - Project EXCELL!

Amphitheater Unified School District (Amphitheater) includes 20 K-12 schools on the north side of Tucson, Arizona. Amphitheater has a long history of innovative compensation structures. The district has been involved in some form of alternative compensation for over 20 years. Project EXCELL! (EXCELL) began in 2007 with a \$29 million TIF grant.

Communication, trust, and the expertise of a wide group of stakeholders are essential to the success of EXCELL. Roseanne Lopez, a longtime teacher, principal and central office administrator in Amphitheater, extended the invitation to anyone in the district who wanted to participate in the design and implementation of the TIF grant. One hundred twenty people, including principals and teachers, volunteered to help design the compensation system. Additionally, Lopez met regularly with the teachers’ association president and weekly with senior district administration. The collaboration between administrators and teachers from the beginning developed a deep understanding of what needed to occur in schools to motivate teachers.

Preliminary data appears to point to improvements in student achievement in all EXCELL schools, with a significant upward trend in average achievement growth rate in all schools. Across all 20 schools, the increases in math and reading scores have been statistically significant since the implementation of Project EXCELL. In addition, hard-to-staff positions have been filled with highly qualified teachers in all of the targeted areas. For example, three years ago, there were 11 high school math positions without a highly qualified teacher, and in 2009-10, highly qualified teachers filled all of these positions.

Guilford County Schools, NC - Mission Possible

In 2005-06, Guilford County, NC, began implementing Mission Possible, a differentiated compensation program, in 22 schools with the help of local and foundation funds. In 2006-07, Guilford County expanded Mission Possible to eight additional schools with the Teacher Incentive Fund. Mission Possible is part of an initiative to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers in critical-needs schools in order to improve student outcomes.

In order to receive the individual performance bonus, teachers must complete annual professional development activities and earn value-added scores at least one standard error above the district mean for a payment of \$2,500, or 1.5 standard errors above the district mean for a payment of \$4,000. Principals receive \$5,000 if the school makes Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Mission Possible appears to be having a positive impact on student and teacher outcomes. First, based on 2008-09 data, the percentage of AYP goals achieved increased by 18.5% in Mission Possible schools compared to 11.8% across all Guilford County Schools. Second, at the high school level, the cohort graduation rate has increased in Mission Possible schools by 3.9% as compared to 0.2% in all Guilford County Schools. Finally, attrition in Mission Possible schools has fallen from 29% in 2006-07 to 11.7% in the 2008-09—below the district average of 12.8%.

School District of Philadelphia, PA - Charter Schools (Philly TAP)

Philly TAP serves 11 charter schools, which have high-minority and low-income student populations. In order for a school to join Philly TAP, two-thirds of teachers in the school had to vote to participate. The TIF-supported charter schools implement TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement.

Philly TAP is changing school culture and improving student outcomes through incentives, rigorous evaluations, job-embedded professional development and key personnel who make this possible. At the school level, there is a leadership team that consists of master teachers, mentor teachers and administrators. The strong TAP coaching model relies on four classroom observations each year supported by weekly cluster meetings run by master and mentor teachers. Master and mentor teachers field-test strategies with students in the school before presenting them to teachers at weekly meetings. These teacher leaders also support teachers in analyzing student work and through individual coaching.

In just two years of full implementation, Philly TAP schools have increased proficiency in math and reading by more than 12% on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment. All 11 schools' students have averaged more than a year of academic growth in reading and math.

South Carolina Department of Education and Florence County School District Three, SC - TAP

Two grantees in South Carolina won TIF awards totaling \$40 million. The South Carolina Department of Education was awarded a grant to implement TAP in six districts across the state, and Florence County School District Three was awarded a grant to implement TAP in six schools. 29 schools are implementing TAP using TIF funds and receive training and technical assistance from the South Carolina TAP Director and his staff at the state department of education. In interviews with 17 state officials, district leaders, and teachers connected to these TIF sites, they pointed to, without exception, the change in culture that came with the implementation of TAP. Teachers across the state in vastly different contexts reported that collaboration had increased.

The implementation of TAP has also corresponded with an improvement in student achievement. More than 90% of the TIF schools made at least a year's worth of growth in reading, math, science, and social studies. Fifty-four percent of the TIF schools averaged two standard errors above expected growth for one year. In addition, in just their first or second year of TAP implementation, several TAP schools have moved off the Palmetto Priority Schools list, which identifies the lowest-performing schools in the state based on student achievement.

University of Texas System (Texas TAP)

This TIF grant is a unique partnership among the University of Texas, the Texas Education Agency and the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. The Texas TAP team is housed at the University of Texas and provides support to the TIF sites as well as other TAP sites across the state. For the 2009-10 school year, Texas TAP was implemented in 36 schools with 27 of those schools funded through TIF.

Texas TAP is having a demonstrable positive impact on student achievement. Students in Texas TAP schools are averaging significantly more than a year's expected growth. In addition to excellent value-added growth, Texas TAP schools are demonstrating dramatic improvement on their school accountability ratings. Texas rates its schools at four levels: "exemplary," "recognized," "academically acceptable" and "academically unacceptable." After four years of TAP implementation, these ratings averaged across all TAP schools have risen from just below "academically acceptable" to well above "recognized." The growth is relatively steady across the four years, with a fairly significant increase between the third and fourth years of implementation.

Texas TAP is making a difference in individual schools beyond student achievement scores. Audelia Creek Elementary increased its teacher retention rate from 33% to 92% after the second year of TAP implementation. Similarly, Thurgood Marshall Elementary and Forest Meadow Junior High increased their retention rates from 36% to 87% and 56% to 80% respectively.

This report will further describe each of the six sites through an "at-a-glance" description, an examination of context, impact, reasons for success, challenges, and a final section that highlights TIF's impact on teachers and students.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING – TAP: THE SYSTEM FOR TEACHER AND STUDENT ADVANCEMENT, CONSORTIUM OF ALGIERS CHARTER SCHOOLS, NEW ORLEANS, LA

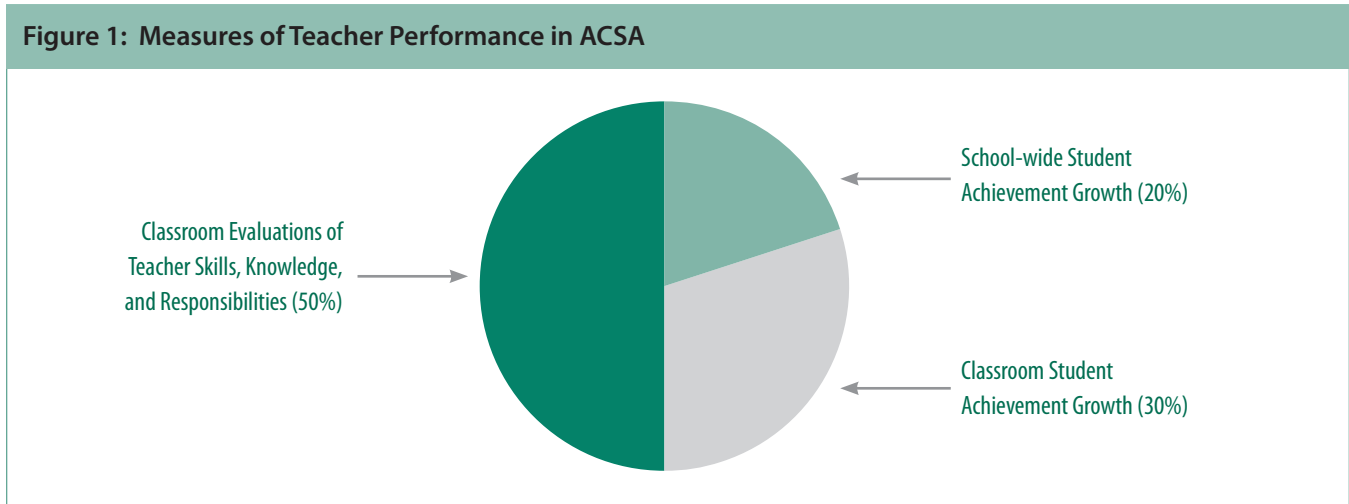
| | |
|---|--|
| Number of schools in charter association | 9 |
| Number of TIF schools | All 9 (6 elementary/middle, 3 high schools) |
| Characteristics of TIF schools | 95% of students are black, 87% of students qualify for free and reduced meals, 9% qualify for special education services |
| Impact on students in TIF schools | For the 2008-09 school year, 5 of 8 schools achieved two standard errors above a year's growth, 2 achieved one standard error above a year's growth, and 1 achieved a year's growth; 1 school did not have sufficient data to calculate value-added growth |
| Impact on teachers in TIF schools | Teacher attrition rates fell from 40% to 7% |
| Bonus range for teachers and principals (2008-09) | Teachers: \$1,250-\$4,750 Principals: \$5,000 -\$8,800 |
| Average teacher salary in Algiers (2008-09) | \$44,000 |
| TIF Grant Award | \$17.6 million |

Context

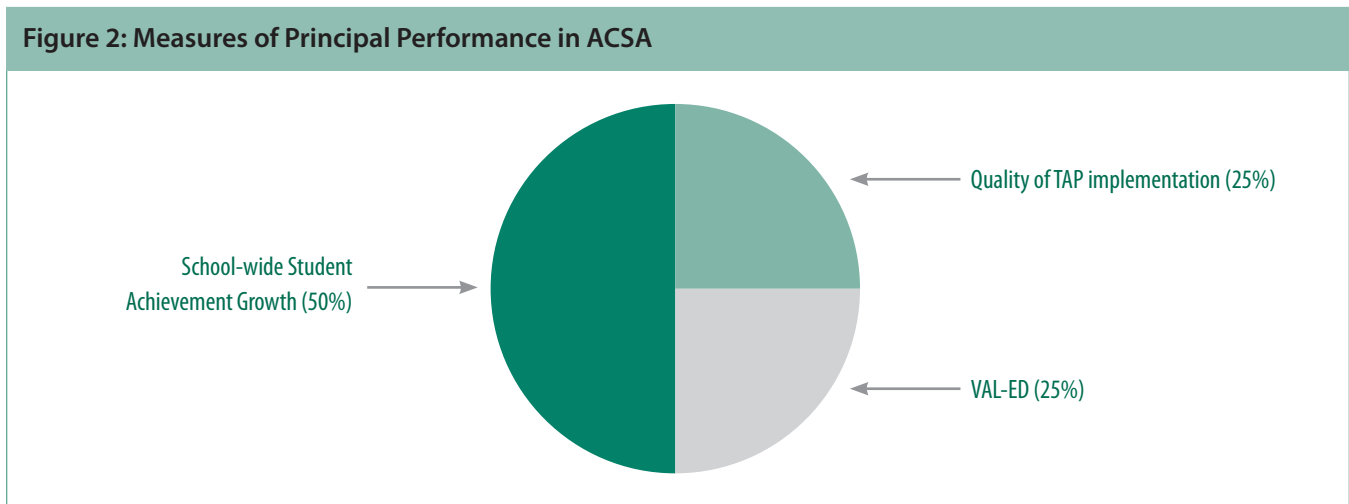
In the wake of the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina, the Algiers Charter Schools Association (ACSA) opened its doors on December 15, 2005 in the West Bank area of New Orleans. The ACSA mission is to “prepare every school and every teacher to teach every child so that all will learn.” ACSA is open to all students by choice without admissions tests. The district consists of six K-8 or Pre-K-8 schools and three high schools serving nearly 5,400 students. 95% of students are black and 87% are eligible to receive free and reduced price meals. The ACSA schools partnered with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) to implement TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement. TAP is a comprehensive system of evaluation, professional development, career advancement, and performance-based compensation. TAP is ACSA's primary driver for improving teacher effectiveness and growth in student achievement, and as such, is incorporated into each school's charter (see Appendix B for additional information about TAP). NIET received a \$17.6 million TIF grant that has provided funding to enable ACSA to offer performance-based compensation, recruitment and retention incentives, and an expanded system of support for principals and teachers. The TIF funded schools are part of a growing Louisiana TAP system that includes schools across the state that receive training and technical assistance from the Louisiana TAP Director and staff at the state department of education.

Master teachers receive full release from their classrooms; mentor teachers receive partial release. Master and mentor teachers lead professional development in the form of weekly “cluster group” meetings with teams of teachers who examine student work and differentiate instruction by dividing that work into high, middle, and low-achieving groups of students. From this data, they then identify research-based strategies targeting specific areas of need. They also support individual teachers in their classrooms.

For the performance bonuses, the teacher’s skills, knowledge, and responsibilities (SKR) score as measured by the average of several classroom evaluations counts for 50%, classroom value-added growth scores based on Louisiana state assessments account for 30%, and school-wide value-added gains determined by state assessments account for the final 20% (See Figure 1). For teachers not teaching tested grades or subjects, school-wide value-added gains and the average of the classroom evaluations score each count for 50% of performance bonuses.



Principals in ACSA received performance bonuses of up to \$10,000 based 50% on school-wide student achievement gains, 25% based on the quality of TAP implementation as measured by a school review (See Appendix C), and 25% based on the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED), a multi-rater, evidence-based approach to measure the effectiveness of principals.



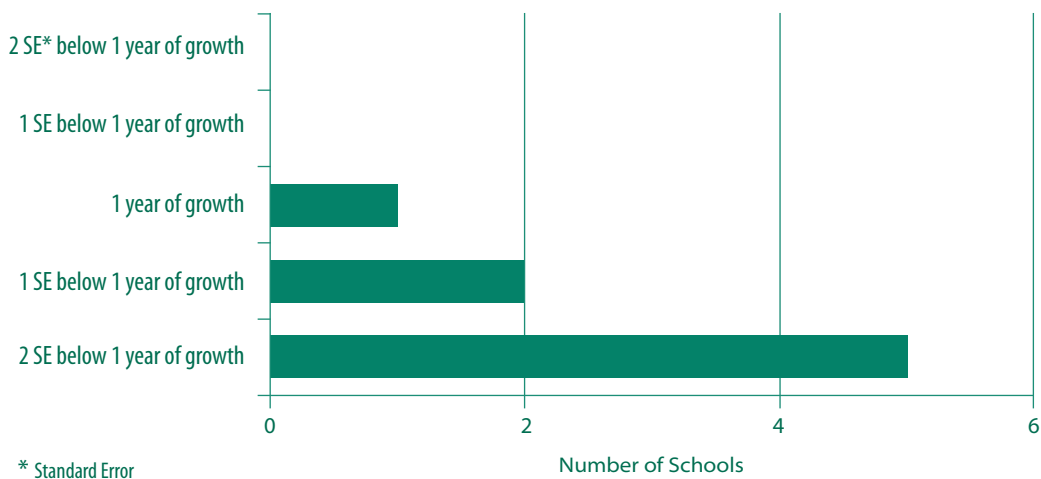
ACSA CEO Dr. Andrea Thomas-Reynolds attributes much of ACSA schools’ success to the improved quality of their teachers through TAP. Even before receiving federal dollars through NIET’s TIF grant, ACSA had committed to TAP by including TAP in each school’s charter. This commitment to TAP is evident in tangible ways. TAP Coordinator Faydra Alexander says, “We communicated very clearly to our community what we were doing and why, and to that [TAP] is a departure from business as usual.” TAP helped create a common language between schools, and between schools and the community, around a relentless pursuit of improved student outcomes. Dr. Thomas-Reynolds sees ACSA’s charter

status as a tremendous advantage. “With the autonomy that’s provided to these schools, and since we were based at the site level, it removed any barriers that principals would have had in terms of implementing TAP.”

Impact

TAP has positively impacted student academic achievement, teacher effectiveness, and the school culture as a whole. All eight of the ACSA schools that had value-added data made outstanding gains in student achievement based on growth on state assessments in 2008-09. (See Figure 3 - Algiers Technology Academy had just completed a “practice” year of TAP implementation and, therefore, did not have the measures to determine value-added in 2008-09.) Of those eight schools, seven made significantly more than a year’s academic growth, and one made a solid year’s growth.

Figure 3: ACSA Value-Added Growth, 2008-09



“TAP also provides the framework wherein shared leadership can take place, particularly in providing professional development support for teachers. TAP is not just what we say; it’s the core of what we do. It’s who we are.”

TAP has also had a significant impact on ACSA’s teachers. Teddy Broussard, NIET Senior Program Specialist, a 34-year veteran teacher, administrator and formerly a Louisiana school-turnaround specialist, offers his perspective on what sets ACSA schools apart. “The difference in TAP schools is nothing less than phenomenal. We have teachers who are focused, aided by job-embedded professional development during the school day led by teachers with records of student achievement. The teaching capacity in those buildings has risen tremendously.” Trenise Duvernay at Alice M. Harte Charter School, says, “With TAP, there is a structure for them to analyze student work and determine where the needs are for each child. A lot of teachers who have taught for a number of years fear that it is just another program, but when teachers start to look at student work and data in clusters, they see that their students are learning. That sells them on what TAP does.” The reform has had a dramatic impact on teacher retention. In the year prior to Katrina, the teacher attrition rate was nearly 40%; however, that rate has fallen to just 7%.

Faydra Alexander cites the shared leadership in the TIF schools as a primary reason for the change in school culture. “It’s not just the principal making decisions in isolation. You have a leadership team of administrators as well

as master and mentor teachers working together to support teachers.” She adds, “TAP also provides the framework wherein shared leadership can take place, particularly in providing professional development support for teachers. TAP is not just what we *say*; it’s the core of what we *do*. It’s who we are.”

Reasons for Success

This positive impact on teaching and school culture requires fidelity of implementation, a comprehensive approach, strong leadership, and the right personnel. Broussard highlights a mistake that many leaders make. “I’ve seen that sometimes when it comes to positions like this, principals want to reward people who have been with them for a long time, rather than those who have produced results and outstanding accomplishments in the classroom as far as student achievement goals. Hire master teachers based on qualifications, experience, and commitment to the process, rather than out of loyalty. If the right people aren’t in these positions, it’ll come back to bite you in the long run.”

Alexander compares the comprehensive approach of TAP to a tapestry. “The principal and teachers must commit to the process. There has to be a commitment to implement with fidelity, to develop relationships with support mechanisms or support groups. These are very personal relationships to make sure that all of your stakeholders are vested and understand what the reform system can provide. For me, the TAP is so comprehensive, and the parts so intertwined, that they really are not parts. It’s more of an ACSA tapestry.”

Challenges, Sustainability, and Implications

At the school level, Principal Monica Boudouin recalls several initial challenges. “TAP started a year before I arrived. Some of the teachers had not bought in. I needed to show that I was invested in the model, so I sat in on every 90-minute cluster meeting. The other key to getting teachers on board was field-testing lessons with targeted teachers. We went in and modeled the strategy and then went back to that teacher with the data. You can’t just tell teachers; you have to show them. When they started to see the difference the strategies made for kids, the teachers wanted to change.”

Sustainability is a concern in ACSA, particularly in light of budget cuts that have been occurring in the state. However, ACSA had implemented TAP, including performance pay, before TIF dollars were received. Further, the Algiers schools are nine of over 40 schools in Louisiana that are implementing TAP. As such, there is a state TAP support structure within the Louisiana Department of Education that works to assist the schools in developing a long-term sustainability plan. The ACSA leadership stresses the need to think in innovative ways about existing funds. They are seeking to reallocate state and federal funds to support TAP implementation, including Title I, Title II, state tobacco settlement money, and state grants.

What TIF Means to Teachers and Students

Alexander shared one illustrative story of ACSA’s impact. “My niece, who was six at the time, went through Hurricane Katrina. Her family moved to Tennessee after the storm, but she struggled there academically. I said, ‘You need to send her back to New Orleans.’ You were never able to say, ‘You need to send your kids to my school,’ when my children who are now 17 and 22 were in school in New Orleans. My niece stayed with me for 18 months and attended school in Algiers. She had teachers who knew their instruction and understood what this kid was going through. They helped her develop a love of learning, and she blossomed. To be able to say, ‘you need to bring your kids back to New Orleans,’ was just huge.”

To hear this type of praise from the CEO and project director might be expected. However, Chris Young is a 6th grade math and science teacher at William J. Fischer Accelerated Academy, who is just completing his first year in ACSA. He chose to come to the Algiers schools because of TAP. This is his ninth year of teaching, having taught in Los Angeles and New Orleans. “I saw an article in the *Times-Picayune* about TAP last year. I was drawn to the system because I was going to be evaluated multiple times in meaningful ways. I could grow professionally. In my previous years of teaching, I had not

had a lot of opportunity for professional development. I just kept getting told that I was doing a 'great job.' I would go to my administrators and ask for feedback, and I just felt like I was the least of their worries. This year I have had four formal observations and many informal observations by my master and mentor teachers."

Ultimately TAP lifts Chris's profession. "I think the bonuses are a good thing. I feel like the teaching profession suffers for a lot of reasons in the public eye when you are paid based on how long you have been there. I think it is a very good idea to pay teachers for what they do in the classroom. I think this type of incentive will elevate the profession. I think so many people think that anybody can teach. What makes teaching look bad is that it doesn't matter what you do; you are not paid based on how effective you are. TAP is great in that it not only provides bonuses, but also the supports to help you achieve the bonuses that you want."

AMPHITHEATER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #10, AZ – PROJECT EXCELL!

| MEASURE | DATA |
|---|---|
| Number of schools in district | 20 |
| Number of TIF schools | 11 (7 elementary, 2 middle, 1 elementary/middle, 1 high school) |
| Characteristics of TIF schools compared to district | More ethnic and racial diversity, more poverty, and more ELLs than district |
| Impact on students in TIF schools | Significant improvement on K-2 DIBELS results, waiting for '09-'10 NWEA MAP test data |
| Impact on teachers in TIF schools | Increased collaboration and support; teachers are examining student work and changing practice together |
| Bonus range for teachers and principals (2008-09) | \$0-\$10,000 |
| Average teacher salary (2008-09) | \$37,364 |
| TIF Grant Award | \$29 million |

Context

Amphitheater Unified School District (Amphitheater) includes 20 K-12 schools on the north side of Tucson, Arizona. Amphitheater has a long history of innovative compensation structures. The district has been involved in some form of alternative compensation for over 20 years including career ladder and incentive pay programs initiated by the state. Lack of adequate funding has significantly limited these programs in recent years. In April 2010, 25% of Amphitheater’s teachers were let go through a reduction-in-force. Anyone hired since 2005 was released in order to make up for a loss of \$14 million in state funding.

Project EXCELL! (EXCELL) began in 2007 with a \$29 million TIF grant. In the fall of 2007, district leaders, teachers and data analysts collaborated in the design of the program. The goals were: improved student achievement, differentiated pay for teachers and principals, improved professional development, recruitment and retention of highly-qualified teachers in hard-to-staff schools, and an improved district data-management plan. In the spring of 2008, the program was implemented with the first payout to teachers and principals coming that summer. The first full academic year of implementation was 2008-09.

Bonuses for student achievement are based on growth over the course of the year through a model developed by Jay Midyett, Amphitheater’s lead data analyst. The value-added model is based on scores from the Northwest Evaluation Association MAP test. The test is an online adaptive assessment in reading and math that increases or decreases in difficulty as students answer correctly or incorrectly, which provides a measure of student learning without a “floor” or “ceiling effect.” Midyett’s model is a linear regression model based on one to two years of baseline data that takes ELL status, special education status, socio-economic status, and mobility into account (See Appendix D).

In addition to student achievement growth, EXCELL is using multiple measures to determine teacher and principal impact on school culture and student achievement. Roseanne Lopez, the TIF director and head of district performance-pay programs, describes the district’s focus, “We wanted to make sure that we looked at all aspects of the teachers’ and

principals’ jobs. We’re not all about student achievement based on test results. There is a whole lot more to these jobs. So in order to participate in our project, you have to participate in all three aspects of the project: professional development, leadership, and student achievement. So half of the award is based on student achievement, and then 25% each is based on leadership and professional development” (See Appendix E).

Impact

Preliminary data collection appears to point to improvement in student achievement in all EXCELL schools, although causality for these growth rates may be attributed to a number of factors. The most recent analysis of MAP scores indicates growth from the first implementation year in 2008 to the present in both reading and math at all elementary, middle, and high schools (See Table 1). The RIT scores reported by MAP indicate an upward trend with the average growth rate of 2.73 across all schools, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. From 2008-2010 educators received performance based compensation for classroom and school-wide value added increases of 9% at the classroom level and 9.3% at the school level.

Table 1: Gains in Reading and Math on MAP Tests in EXCELL Schools – *2008-2010

| | School | Test | Average RIT Scores Spring 2008 | Average RIT Scores Spring 2010 | RIT*** Score Gain |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Elementary Schools | Donaldson | Reading | 203.46 | 205.42 | 1.96 |
| | Holaway | Reading | 193.58 | 195.87 | 2.29 |
| | Keeling | Reading | 195.17 | 196.19 | 1.02 |
| | Nash | Reading | 192.50 | 194.50 | 2 |
| | Prince | Reading | 192.43 | 195.94 | 3.51 |
| | Rio Vista | Reading | 197.06 | 200.13 | 3.07 |
| | Walker | Reading | 200.16 | 202.41 | 2.25 |
| | Donaldson | Mathematics | 208.69 | 211.37 | 2.68 |
| | Holaway | Mathematics | 196.79 | 200.15 | 3.36 |
| | Keeling | Mathematics | 203.85 | 205.58 | 1.73 |
| | Nash | Mathematics | 200.65 | 204.43 | 3.78 |
| | Prince | Mathematics | 199.84 | 203.65 | 3.81 |
| | Rio Vista | Mathematics | 201.90 | 208.72 | 6.82 |
| | Walker | Mathematics | 206.00 | 210.04 | 4.04 |
| K-8 | Coronado | Reading | 216.46 | 218.05 | 1.59 |
| | Coronado | Mathematics | 225.57 | 227.79 | 2.22 |
| Middle Schools | Amphitheater | Reading | 210.04 | 212.59 | 2.55 |
| | La Cima | Reading | 216.12 | 216.53 | 0.41 |
| | Amphitheater | Mathematics | 222.59 | 226.02 | 3.43 |
| | La Cima | Mathematics | 225.96 | 227.53 | 1.57 |
| High School | Amphitheater | Reading | *218.05 | 221.30 | 3.25 |
| | Amphitheater | Mathematics | *225.67 | 228.35 | 2.68 |
| Average: | | | | | 2.73** |

* Amphitheater High School does not have MAP data for 2008 – scores are from 2009.

** Paired-sample 2-tailed t-test: significant at the .01 level

*** Rasch Unit: a unit of measure that uses individual item difficulty values to estimate student achievement. This creates an equal interval scale.

In visiting elementary schools, middle schools, and a high school in Amphitheater USD collaborative meetings of grade level, subject-specific, or self-selected groups were observed that engaged teachers in job-embedded professional development based on student work. During these collaborative meetings, teachers were focused on needs revealed through student work. For example, at the high school, a group of ELL teachers analyzed student writing from each of their classes. They broke down student performance into high, middle, and low performers to determine what patterns of errors needed to be addressed to move students ahead at each of these levels. In high schools, this type of collaboration and professional development is rare.

The district is collecting other data that illustrate the impact of EXCELL. Hard-to-staff positions have been filled with highly qualified teachers in all of the targeted areas. For example, three years ago, there were 11 high school math positions without a highly qualified teacher. In 2009-10, highly qualified teachers had filled all of these positions. Additionally, the project evaluator is conducting interviews with randomly selected people regarding the project and implementation. Survey results and the findings from the interviews show practice changing and growing support for EXCELL. Teachers have moved from being wary of sharing student work with colleagues to making statements such as, “I need my group!”

Reasons for Success

Communication, trust, and the expertise of a wide group of stakeholders are essential to the success of EXCELL. Roseanne Lopez was repeatedly mentioned by teachers and administrators as a key to the trust that teachers had in the program. A longtime teacher, principal, and central office administrator in Amphitheater, Lopez extended the invitation to anyone in the district who wanted to participate in the design and implementation of the TIF grant. “One hundred twenty people, including principals and teachers, volunteered to come help design this thing. We created design teams—10-12 people in certain categories—for what we knew we needed to design. The rest of the people became part of a focus group. We used a business model. The design team would present ideas to the focus group. The focus group would examine and give feedback. Then we would take the feedback back to the design team, and they’d work on the model further. The teams and focus groups were not rubber stamps. They were valued for their perspectives and expertise, and saw their ideas reflected in the final work.”

Additionally, Lopez met regularly with the teachers’ association president and weekly with senior district administration including payroll. The focus groups continue to meet and give feedback even in year three of implementation. To illustrate the critical nature of this collaboration, one district administrator recounts how school board members continue to thank Lopez and her teams for their effective implementation as they acknowledge the sometimes rancorous implementation of performance-pay plans. “They tell her, ‘this could have been a nightmare. Thank you so much for your work.’” The collaboration between administrators and teachers from the beginning developed a deep understanding of what needed to occur in schools to motivate teachers. For example, Cathy Eiting, Chief Academic Officer, notes, “The incentive offered must be significant. We want people to do business differently in order to take teacher practice to a new level of professionalism.”

Principal leadership and support of the superintendent are vital to the success of the initiative as well. Principal leadership is vital because the individual professional growth plan (IGP) of each teacher must align to the school improvement plan. The IGP then determines what the teacher will do for professional development, leadership and student achievement growth, thereby aligning the school’s growth to the teacher’s growth to the eventual payout of the teacher. Ten of 11 schools in the grant report improvement in school culture and increased collaboration.

Student learning is a clear priority of EXCELL. However, as Lopez points out, “We believe as a system that student achievement by standardized measures is not our *only* goal. Our implementation has a classroom assessment component that is designed or selected by the teachers based on the particular needs of their students and situation . . . We’re looking

beyond the test score to what students are actually doing in the classroom.” To facilitate professional growth and focus on student learning, the program uses 16 instructional support leaders (ISLs) and 10 instructional coaches to work with principals. These skilled educators were selected through a rigorous screening process and serve for two years with full release from their classrooms. Every teacher receives two observations per year by an ISL and two to four by an administrator. Principals and assistant principals receive two and a half days of training on the observation rubric. ISLs receive five days of training. Much of the training involves scoring video lessons to ensure inter-rater reliability. Ten instructional coaches, also with full release from their classrooms, support individual growth plans by working with teachers to develop and refine their practice according to specifically defined goals.

Challenges, Sustainability, and Implications

How this will continue to work in the fall is unclear as the ISLs and 10 instructional coaches will be reduced to only seven ISLs due to budget cuts. According to Lopez, these leaders are essential for creating “a collaborative environment that understands student achievement data analysis and how that needs to be connected to teaching and learning. Many districts are doing a lot of data analysis, but they haven’t been writing a prescription! In other words, the data gets collected, but nothing changes in classrooms. The district has to be ready with skilled leadership. That’s critical. These performance-based-pay programs can’t just come in from some side door; they need to be systemic.”

Sustainability of EXCELL beyond the grant period is a significant concern. Associate Superintendent Patrick Nelson describes the district’s struggle quite simply: “When you are worried about keeping your doors open, it is difficult to keep any initiatives going.” Lopez adds, “With this recession, we’re struggling. We had a sustainability plan, we still have a sustainability plan, but the problem is that now the legislature wants to take it all away. And so we’re looking at that. For permanent sustainability, there has to be a continuous source of funding, so we have to look at funding structures.

I mean deeply rethinking how we use our budget, but most people in our state are not willing to talk about that quite yet.”

What TIF Means to Teachers and Students

Tassi Call, principal at Prince Elementary School, describes how EXCELL is changing practice in Amphitheater USD. She started as principal in the same year EXCELL began at Prince. “Teachers were hungry for change. Others did not know what they were missing. Before Project EXCELL, the 2nd grade team did not talk to each other. Now they collaborate daily, look at student work, and no longer talk about ‘my students’; instead, they talk about ‘our students.’” This daily collaboration was partially made possible by art, physical education, music, and other specialists increasing their class sizes by seven students to allow teachers to meet, because the specialists felt so strongly about the need to collaborate. These qualitative changes in school culture are supported by gains in mid-term reading. From the 2008-09 to 2009-10 school years, 2nd grade reading proficiency jumped from 25% to 60%. Ms. Call’s success has occurred at a school with a mobility rate of 60%. As a result, the superintendent asked her to take over an adjacent middle school in addition to her role as principal at Prince.

Pam Busch, a 35-year teaching veteran and language arts teacher at La Cima Middle School, explains how EXCELL changed her approach to teaching. “My teaching partner and I decided to incorporate Bloom’s Taxonomy into all aspects of our language arts classroom. If not for EXCELL, I would not have

“Teachers were hungry for change. Others did not know what they were missing. Before Project EXCELL, the 2nd grade team did not talk to each other. Now they collaborate daily, look at student work, and no longer talk about ‘my students’; instead, they talk about ‘our students.’”

tackled something so arduous. I knew it had made a difference when students started saying, 'these test questions are all knowledge-based questions. Your synthesis questions really make us think.' They ask, 'Can we do synthesis today?'" In addition to the change EXCELL has made in her practice, the program gives "teachers a chance to increase the money we so dearly need." She also points out that "you are not going to get the kind of people you want in education until you change the way you pay them."

Robin Meece, a 14-year teaching veteran and ISL, emphasizes the importance of a monetary incentive in motivating and retaining quality teachers: "Because money is attached to growth, teachers are learning quality instructional and assessment techniques that they might not have engaged in had there not been a monetary award attached . . . Any teacher you want to keep wants a performance-pay program."

GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS, NC – MISSION POSSIBLE

| MEASURE | DATA |
|---|---|
| Number of schools in district | 120 |
| Number of TIF schools | 8 of 30 schools in Mission Possible funded through TIF (13 elementary, 7 middle, 10 high) |
| Characteristics of TIF schools compared to district | High-need schools that had significantly higher teacher attrition rates that are now below the district average |
| Impact on students in TIF schools | Increased pass rates on AYP goals as well as increased graduation rates |
| Impact on teachers in TIF schools | Hard-to-staff positions are being filled with qualified teachers |
| Bonus range for teachers and principals (2008-09) | Teacher recruitment/retention bonus: \$2,500-\$10,000 Teacher performance pay: \$2,500 or \$4,000 Principal performance pay: \$0 or \$5,000 |
| Average teacher salary (2008-09) | \$43,922 |
| TIF Grant Award | \$8 million |

Context

In 2005-06, Guilford County, NC, began implementing Mission Possible, a differentiated compensation program, in 22 schools with the help of local and foundation funds. In 2006-07, Guilford County expanded Mission Possible to eight additional schools with the Teacher Incentive Fund. Mission Possible is part of an initiative to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers in critical-needs schools in order to improve student outcomes. Recruiting incentives range from \$2,500 to \$10,000 and performance incentives are either \$2,500 or \$4,000 depending on value-added scores. The recruitment (first year) and retention (subsequent years) awards are for all classroom teachers K-5, middle grades language arts, English I (9th grade), and all math courses grades 6-12. In order to receive the individual performance bonus, teachers must complete all of the annual professional development activities and earn value-added scores at least one standard error above the district mean for the \$2,500 incentive, or 1.5 standard errors above the district mean for the \$4,000 incentive. Guilford County contracts with Educator Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), to provide value-added scores. The EVAAS system was developed by Bill Sanders and is currently administered by SAS, Inc. These scores are derived from state reading and math test scores in grades three through eight, as well as state end-of-course exams in high schools. Teachers in un-tested grades or subject areas are not eligible for performance incentives.⁹ Principals receive either \$5,000 or nothing based on whether or not the school made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Impact

Mission Possible appears to be having a positive impact on student outcomes. Although the TIF schools only have two years of data and the original Mission Possible schools only have three, there are some positive trends in these schools that could be at least partially attributed to the effect of Mission Possible. First, based on 2008-09 data, the percentage of AYP goals achieved increased by 18.5% in Mission Possible schools compared to 11.8% across all Guilford County Schools. Second, at the high school level, the cohort graduation rate has increased in Mission Possible schools by 3.9% as compared to 0.2% in all Guilford County Schools.

Mission Possible lists as its three to four year midterm goals: faculty retention and improved student climate. Student achievement is the long-term goal for years five and six. According to a school board report,¹⁰ faculty retention has indeed improved by 17.3% since 2006 as compared to the district improvement of 0.2%. Teacher attrition rates in Mission Possible schools started out significantly higher than the district averages of 13% and 16% in the 2006-07 and 2007-08 years, respectively, and dropped below the district average in 2008-09 (See Figure 4 and Appendix F). Mission Possible Director Amy Holcombe says, “One of the things I’m most excited about is that we are below the district’s attrition rate. That far exceeds any goal we ever set.”

Figure 4: Attrition Data: Percentage of Faculty Lost Per Year



While there seems to be an increasing positive impact on student outcomes and retention, school climate surveys show a decrease in satisfaction as measured by the number of staff who gave their school an overall grade of A or B.¹¹ Holli Bayonas, Mission Possible’s external evaluator at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, believes that this could be attributed to the fact that the purpose of the program has not been clearly articulated. The open-ended responses indicate a feeling that everyone should be eligible to receive an incentive, which is not currently the case.¹²

While there are challenges to communicating the overall purpose of the program, those eligible for bonuses are very aware of their value-added data. Holcombe attributes much of this to the communication around the value-added data. “Over the course of the grant, we have done a lot of educating about how to use EVAAS data. This includes how to interpret it. We’ve done a lot of training with our principals how to debrief and explain the data. Because the value-added data is now tied to dollars, people are very excited about the data. They can’t wait until it’s distributed. They’ll call me asking, ‘Is the data ready?’ That is a huge change from four years ago. That’s the most exciting change to me because their focus is now on growth.”

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Reasons for Success

Leaders in Mission Possible cite the level of communication to teachers as a primary reason for its impact to date. A common core of professional development for all participants helps to build a common vocabulary around student growth. Beyond this core training, each school leadership team can vote to pool its dollars and host school-wide professional development to address something in their school improvement plan, or they can vote to individually pursue professional development to address individual teachers' individual growth plans. According to Holcombe, "If you talk to the participants of the program, they cite the professional development as one of the biggest incentives of the program. They love the salary incentives, but they really like the opportunity to grow professionally because, were it not for these funds, they probably wouldn't be able to engage in some of these experiences."

Challenges, Sustainability, and Implications

The biggest challenge that Mission Possible faced in Guilford County was the structure of the program. By only providing incentives for hard-to-staff positions and to some teachers in specific grade levels and subject areas, the program encountered criticism from teachers who were ineligible to receive bonuses. The reduced number of teachers that could receive bonuses allowed the initiative to increase the monetary incentives in key areas, but in schools where there was not a strong leadership team, the program's structure engendered some resentment. Some of the principals were able to turn complaints into conversations about how to become certified to teach in the high-need subject areas. For example, three teachers who wanted the highest level of incentives took additional courses to add certification in math.

The sustainability challenge has become a key part of conversations about redesigning Mission Possible over the past year. The redesigned Mission Possible will begin in the 2011-12 school year after the TIF grant is over. In order to sustain the program, district leadership is working to build support, from the school community itself and the community the district serves. "The local education association and teachers are integral to the design of the program to ensure that it meets their needs. No matter how great the program is, if it's not something that they can get behind, it's less effective," said Holcombe. Holcombe differentiates between strategic compensation and performance pay because in their local implementation, a large portion of the funds is used for hard-to-staff positions, not for performance. Thus far, 22 of Mission Possible's 30 schools are locally funded, and the staff is looking to expand this number. One way will be through an additional TIF grant for schools not currently in the program. The team is also looking to creatively pool resources that have not traditionally been used for incentive pay or professional development.

What TIF Means to Teachers and Students

Garriot Rose, principal at Academy at High Point Central, a TIF school, compares what staffing was like before and after Mission Possible: "Before Mission Possible, it was difficult to schedule candidates to interview for positions. The Academy had a bad reputation and low achievement scores. Most candidates were not interested. After Mission Possible, I had to replace an English 1 teacher and landed a former English Curriculum Specialist for the position."¹³ Principals in hard-to-staff schools with hard-to-staff subjects repeat this refrain. The tide is turning in Guilford County Schools toward making positions that were less desirable become the positions that are the most highly prized. Ongoing data collection will determine how greatly this will impact student outcomes. However, logic would seem to indicate that a broader pool of qualified applicants would result in better teachers being hired, which should, in turn, increase student learning.

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA, PA – CHARTER SCHOOLS (PHILLY TAP)

| MEASURE | DATA |
|---|--|
| Number of charter schools in Philadelphia | 76 ¹⁴ |
| Number of TIF schools | 11 (1 elementary, 10 elementary/middle) |
| Characteristics of TIF schools compared to district | TIF TAP Charters are composed of 80%-100% minority students and 93% of students receive free and reduced meals |
| Impact on students in TIF schools | In just two years of full implementation, Philly TAP schools have increased proficiency in math and reading by more than 12% on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment. All 11 schools' students have averaged more than a year of growth in reading and math. |
| Impact on teachers in TIF schools | Increased collegiality and support especially for young teachers |
| Bonus range for teachers and principals (2008-09) | Teachers: \$500-\$3,900 Principals: \$5,000-\$7,000 |
| Average teacher salary (2008-09) | Each charter is different, but the average salaries in each building range from approximately \$35,000 to \$68,000 |
| TIF Grant Award | \$20.7 million awarded – due to changes in the grant will receive \$11.8 million |

Context

TIF Funds were awarded to the Philadelphia Public Schools; however, due to some opposition to pay for performance in other public schools, the money was directed toward charter schools. The charter schools are connected through their implementation of TAP (Philly TAP) and share two common goals:

- 1) Increase student achievement by helping teachers and administrators enhance their professional skills; and
- 2) Make teaching a more attractive and rewarding career.

The 11 charter schools now receiving TIF money average 80%-100% minority student populations and over 93% of all students receive free and reduced meals. According to Philly TAP Director Susan Ostrich, the charter schools provide several unique challenges and opportunities. “The charters are their own local education agencies that operate independently of one another. Young, mobile teachers predominantly staff the charters. This can lead to higher turnover.”

In order for a school to join Philly TAP, two-thirds of teachers in the school had to vote to participate. Philly TAP provides training and professional development on conducting classroom instruction analyses, facilitating common planning time, using student academic growth data and implementing the performance-based compensation program. Additionally, there is ongoing, site-based support from the Philly TAP staff.

At the school level, the leadership team consists of master teachers, mentor teachers and administrators. The maximum ratios are 1 master teacher for every 18 teachers and 1 mentor teacher for every 8 teachers. Master and mentor teachers are partially or fully released from their classroom duties to coach teachers, test instructional strategies, plan and implement professional development “cluster” meetings, model and teach strategies in clusters, and coordinate, facilitate and participate

in the observation process. Master and mentor teachers model, co-teach, and coach in teachers’ classrooms on a regular basis and support the classroom implementation of instructional strategies. Mentor teachers are released at least five hours per week for TAP duties, and earn a stipend of \$10,000 in addition to their salaries, and mentor teachers earn \$5,000. Every TAP teacher receives one-to-one coaching every week¹⁵. Teacher bonuses for 2008-09 ranged from \$500-\$3,900, and are based 50% on multiple classroom evaluations by multiple evaluators, 30% on student growth measured by the SAS EVAAS value-added data for the grade level or subject team, and 20% on school-wide EVAAS gains. Principal bonuses for 2008-09 ranged from \$5,000-\$7,000 and are based 50% on fidelity of TAP implementation and 50% on school-wide EVAAS gains.

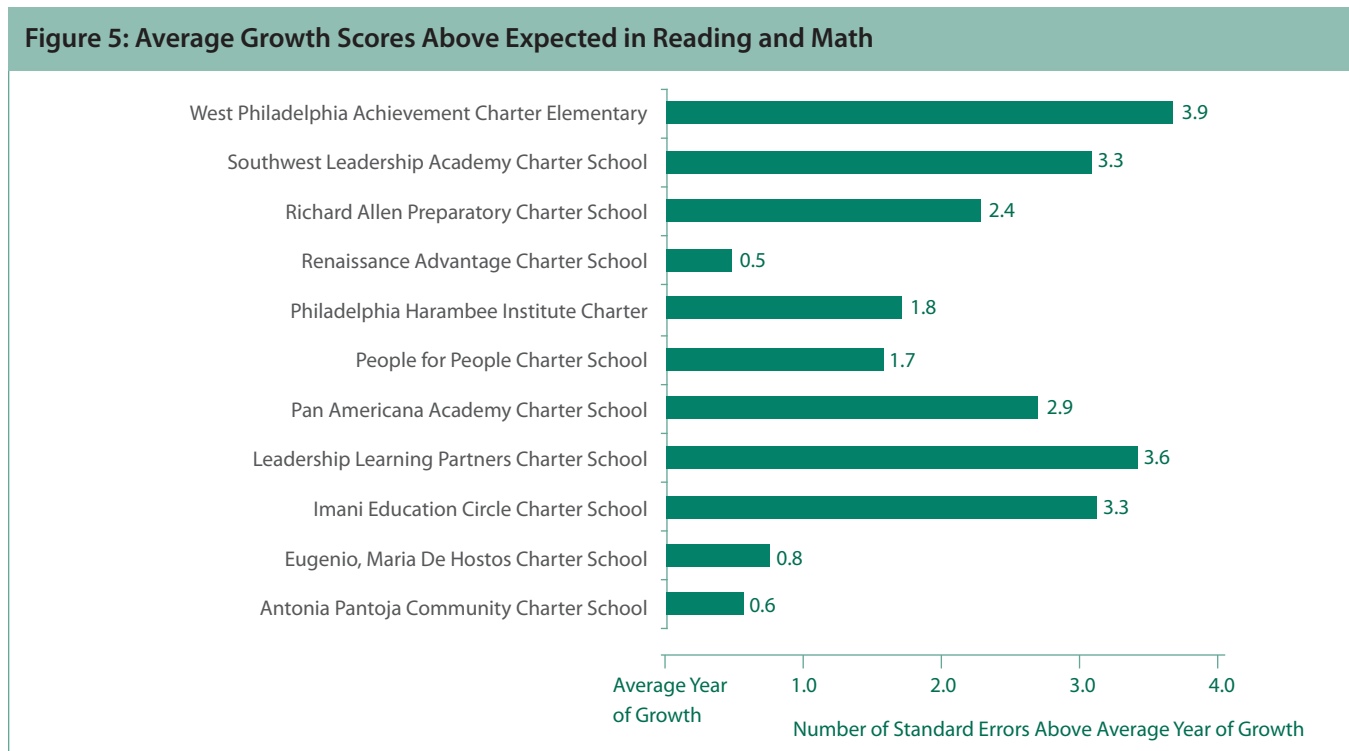
Table 2: How Teacher and Principal Effectiveness is Measured in Philly TAP

| Teacher evaluation | |
|---|-----|
| Classroom observations | 50% |
| Grade-level/Subject-team student growth | 30% |
| School-wide student growth | 20% |
| Principal evaluation | |
| Fidelity of TAP implementation | 50% |
| School-wide student growth | 50% |

Impact

In just two years of full implementation, Philly TAP schools have increased proficiency in math and reading by more than 12% on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). The schools are addressing the needs of all students, in all levels of proficiency. These schools have

increased the percent of students in the Advanced Proficiency category by 6 points in math and reading, and increased the percent of students in the Proficient category by 4 points in reading and 6 points in math. Additionally, all 11 schools’ students have averaged more than a year of growth in reading and math (See Figure 5). Due to this success, every teacher in a Philly TAP school received a performance award for the 2008-09 school year.



Qualitatively, teachers and principals cite the change in school atmosphere as a reason for success in the TIF schools. Ostrich says, “Charter schools that are separate and distinct are working collaboratively for the first time. Second, we are about high-quality instruction, and we talk the same language. Teachers are banding together. Teachers are more knowledgeable.” Atiya Harmon, a five-year teaching veteran at Imani Education Circle Charter School, describes the change taking place with her students in the classroom: “Through the implementation of TAP, my lesson planning has become more intentional, which has resulted in my teaching becoming more focused. My students are taking a greater ownership of their learning, which has resulted in a higher level of confidence and student learning. Not only are test scores increasing, but I have the tools to identify why students are not achieving and the ability to develop strategies to meet their needs.”

“Not only are test scores increasing, but I have the tools to identify why students are not achieving and the ability to develop strategies to meet their needs.”

Reasons for Success

Philly TAP is changing school culture and improving student outcomes because of support structures, job-embedded professional development, and key personnel who make this possible. Modeling, evaluation, and examination of student work lead to productive reflection on teaching and learning. Essential to these processes are the right people. Master and mentor teachers undergo a rigorous screening process to determine their ability to improve the practice of other teachers and their impact on student achievement. Each summer, master and mentor teachers participate in three to four days of intensive professional development to further develop their coaching skills. Much of this training and development involves data analysis and the use of TAP’s evaluation rubrics. A 5th grade mentor teacher at Eugenio Maria de Hostos Bilingual Community Charter School, a bicultural charter school, describes the impact of the evaluations and rubrics. “In observations, teachers know the criteria by which they will be judged, and observers know exactly what to observe. Dialogue occurs later between the observer and teacher to encourage the teacher in an area of strength and help to refine an area of weakness.”

Challenges, Sustainability, and Implications

Implementing a comprehensive approach to teacher effectiveness in new charter schools can be challenging. Claudia Perez, master teacher at Pan American Academy Charter School, describes what it was like to be a master teacher at a school that just opened in 2008-09. “I was coming into a brand new school where no one really knew what qualified me to be a master teacher. Sometimes I would hear teachers say that I really wouldn’t understand because I was not in a classroom, but I did because I had been in the classroom for six years with similar kids. Their perception of me changed when we had an emergency this year. We needed a Spanish-speaking kindergarten teacher as a long-term sub, so I filled in. As I was successful with these students, my credibility increased with other teachers. Having TAP from the beginning made it clear what we are about. We are not about blaming the community or kids for what they do not know. We are about finding solutions to help kids learn.”

Having overcome the challenges of working with a loosely affiliated group of charter schools, Philly TAP’s primary challenge is sustainability. Susan Ostrich explains that the staffing and incentives are essential to the schools’ success. Ostrich stated, “Young, mobile teachers predominantly staff the charters. The schools offer a range of average salaries with schools on the low end averaging \$35,000, to schools on the upper end averaging the mid-to-high \$60,000’s. This can lead to higher turnover.” She believes that the incentive amounts need to be increased from the current range of awards for teachers (The top of the range for 2008-09 was \$3,900). In addition to increased payouts, careful observation,

and evaluation are essential to sustaining the programmatic gains of Philly TAP. As Ostrich explains, “If you want something to get done, you’ve got to inspect it, not expect it.” Classroom-level gains and multiple observations provide the inspection necessary to meet expectations.

In order to address the ongoing sustainability concern, Philly TAP is attempting to increase its visibility and reach out to potential funders. Staff hired a public relations firm to help message and brand Philly TAP. As such, in 2010, Philly TAP launched a new logo, website and newsletter to help better connect to their stakeholders and the public, as well as attract additional funders.

What TIF Means to Teachers and Students

Adrienne Davis, chief academic officer (CAO) of Imani Circle Charter School, exemplifies the instructional pipeline that the Philly TAP model creates and articulates why Philly TAP is successful. “I began at Imani as a classroom teacher 11 years ago. Since then I have held the position of master teacher and CAO of Imani. Since Imani has been in existence, we have tried many different programs to raise student achievement, but nothing provided us with the tools we needed to make significant and lasting changes until TAP.”

At the same school, but at a very different point in his career with only two years of experience, African-American History teacher Henry Mahasi explains why Philly TAP matters to him. “Coming out of college without an education degree, coming to Imani was like walking in darkness. But when I received the TAP training, I finally had the direction and support I needed to become an effective teacher. Without the TAP training and support, I would have become frustrated and left teaching.”

Claudia Perez describes how Philly TAP has changed the way initially resistant teachers can grow. “In our first year, a teacher was very resistant. She was a good teacher, but she kept saying, ‘This isn’t going to work here. It is too much work.’ She wanted to rush through cluster meetings always saying what we were doing wasn’t possible. She was really just nervous about this new way of thinking. At the end of last year, she allowed me to come in to her classroom to model a writing lesson. This changed the way she viewed TAP. At the beginning of this year, she told all of our new teachers about how much of a difference the modeling had made for her and her students. She told them, ‘You might not feel that this will work, but little by little this will make a difference in your classroom and your teaching.’ Recently, she asked me to model another lesson in math. You can see a difference in the way she interacts at cluster meetings and looks at student work to find solutions.”

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND FLORENCE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT THREE, SC – TAP

| MEASURE | DATA |
|---|---|
| Number of districts and schools in South Carolina | 83 districts; 1,186 schools |
| Number of TIF schools | 7 districts; 29 of 43 schools funded through TIF (elementary: 16, middle: 4, elementary/middle: 6, high: 3) |
| Characteristics of TIF schools compared to district | Schools with 85% or higher free and reduced meals in rural and urban schools across the state |
| Impact on students in TIF schools | 95% of TIF schools achieved at least a year's worth of value-added growth; 13% more TIF schools made AYP than similar comparison schools |
| Impact on teachers in TIF schools | Increased collaboration and support; In annual survey teachers give TAP a 90% approval rating; Teacher sense of self-efficacy is high and rose by nearly 4% from 2008 to 2009 |
| Bonus range for teachers and principals (2008-09) | Teachers: \$125 - \$7,071; Principals: \$1,295 - \$10,359 |
| Average teacher salary (2008-09) | \$47,421 ¹⁶ |
| TIF (Cohort 1 and 2) Grant Award | \$46 million |

Context

At over \$40 million, South Carolina was one of the largest recipients of Teacher Incentive Fund money to implement performance pay. Twenty-three schools participated in the first round of TIF and an additional six schools received funding in the second TIF cohort. The 29 TIF funded schools are part of a growing South Carolina TAP system that includes 43 schools that receive training and technical assistance from the South Carolina TAP Director and his staff at the state department of education. Principals and teachers can earn bonuses for improving results for students in their schools (See Appendix G). In a state looking to improve the trajectory of its students in the 21st century, TAP is gaining momentum as a statewide initiative for very high need schools.

Mark Bounds, South Carolina's deputy superintendent, attributes much of the first TIF grant's success to the coordination at the state level. First, he notes the primary benefit of implementing TAP at the state level is the high profile this gave the initiative. Dennis Dotterer, director of South Carolina TAP, recently presented the TAP model to the state board of education garnering support from the incoming board chair. The Board expressed support for SCTAP and said the TIF initiative would be sustained despite cuts of more than \$300 million in education funding through appropriations bill H.4657.¹⁷

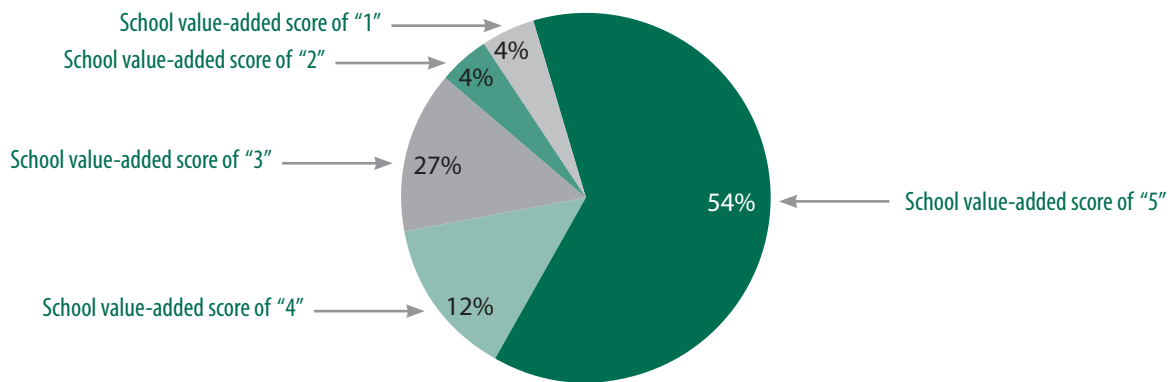
Second, the state-level model enhances the projects' flexibility in reallocating increasingly scarce resources efficiently. Because South Carolina's department of education administers most of the TIF money, the state assists the districts in combining TIF money with other funding streams. For example, the state has been able to help districts re-purpose federal Title I and Title II as well as state funds for struggling schools, known as Alternative Technical Assistance (ATA). This flexibility to reallocate state funds in support of TIF will increase the likelihood of sustainability and overcome the "stovepipes" that, according to Bounds, limit the impact of funds due to stipulations that do not allow for combining resources. Additionally, the state has accepted the TAP evaluation rubric as meeting the requirements of the state evaluation system, avoiding the possibility of an inefficient dual system of evaluation.

Third, having a state director and four regional master teachers who oversee implementation and support allows for increased accountability and better communication between the schools and the state. Allison Jacques, South Carolina’s director of educator preparation, support, and assessment, cites increased fidelity of implementation due to the presence of the state TAP team. If there is an issue in a TIF or TAP school, there is a clear contact person and a process for resolving the issue. Additionally, foundations and other organizations that invest in education can more easily invest in a statewide initiative with one point of contact and a staff to ensure accountability. This state-level organizational structure also allows for statewide sharing of best practice and potential for scaling up.

Impact

The data show some promising trends for schools in their third and fourth years of implementation. As part of South Carolina TIF’s external evaluation, all 29 schools were matched with schools of similar demographics. The comparison demonstrated that 13% more of the TAP schools made AYP than the non-TAP schools. Additionally, according to the SAS value-added measurement, 92% of the TIF schools made at least a year’s worth of growth in reading, math, science, and social studies. Fifty-four percent of the TIF schools received value-added scores of “5,” meaning that the school averages were two standard errors above growth expected for one year (See Figure 6). This represents significantly greater than average growth. In addition, in just their first or second year of TAP implementation, several TAP schools have moved off the Palmetto Priority Schools list, which identifies the lowest-performing schools in the state based on student achievement. These promising results were a large part of the reason that TAP was identified as a state-approved school-turnaround model.

Figure 6: 26 South Carolina K-8 TIF Schools Value-Added Performance 2008-09



* SAS does not calculate value-added scores for the three high schools.

A value-added score of “3” means the school achieved an average of a year’s growth for all students. A value-added “4” is one standard error above a year’s growth, and a value-added “5” is two standard errors above a year’s growth—significantly more growth than comparable schools. A value-added “2” is one standard error below a year’s growth, and a “1” is two standard errors below. In other words, a value-added score of “2” or “1” indicates that students are learning less than is expected in a given year.

In interviews with 17 state officials, district leaders, and teachers connected to these TIF sites, they pointed, without exception, to the change in culture that came with the implementation of TAP. Contrary to the myth that school reform initiatives incorporating performance pay will negatively impact collaboration and school culture, teachers across the state in varied contexts reported that collaboration had increased. David O’Shields, superintendent of Laurens 56, summed up the change as “encouraging innovation and discouraging isolation.” As the superintendent of a district that has both TAP and non-TAP schools, he spoke passionately about the difference TAP makes. O’Shields explained that unique to TAP is its “focused instructional conversations using a common language to examine how students learn—not what teachers do to perform.”

Located in a somewhat rural area of South Carolina, administrators in Laurens 56 cite the advantage TAP provides in recruiting and retaining effective teachers. O’Shields says, “Prior to TAP, we were losing 30 to 40% of our teachers each year. That number is down to 5 to 8%.” They also credit TAP with their increased ability to identify and release ineffective teachers. Assistant Superintendent Maureen Tiller adds, “Dismissing ineffective teachers is much easier because there are so many pieces of evidence. Multiple evaluations are conducted by multiple people and tied to value-added measures. The whole system is tied to support teachers receive.”

Another sign of TAP’s success in Laurens 56 is that TAP created a pipeline of district leadership. Four of the leaders interviewed had been principals at one of the TAP middle schools in the district, including the superintendent and assistant superintendent. Their ascension to higher positions was based on their success in a TAP school. According to Tiller, the middle school she worked at went from being among the lowest-performing schools in the state to the second highest-performing school for growth. The school hit 19 of its 21 AYP indicators in 2008-09, missing two indicators for students with disabilities.

“Multiple evaluations are conducted by multiple people and tied to value-added measures. The whole system is tied to support teachers receive.”

Reasons for Success

Educators in TIF schools across the state cited common reasons for increased student achievement and the positive changes in school cultures. First, educators emphasized that the four TAP components must be implemented together: evaluation, job-embedded professional development, career advancement, and performance pay. Several educators mentioned the need for substantial bonuses to entice teachers to try something new that might take some extra work. Many agreed to try TAP because of the incentive of additional pay if they achieved student growth. After the second year, however, the professional development and growth in their instructional skills became the primary motivator.

Second, educators agreed that master and mentor teachers are essential to success. Lynn Kuykendall, master teacher at Clinton Elementary, compared the growth she experienced through National Board Certification to TAP. “The growth with National Board Certification was my own. It was reflective, but without collaboration. With TAP, you learn and grow with others . . . We grow so much more.” Five different career teachers noted that the work with master and mentor teachers through observations and post-conferences was the key to their success.

Third, significant support from stakeholders is absolutely vital to program sustainability, particularly in the current economic climate. A communication plan that emphasizes a common language, clearly articulates measures, defines what scores mean, with clear payouts and the necessary payroll infrastructure is an essential element to cultivating stakeholder support (See Appendix G for a more detailed description of how performance pay is determined). TAP uses a data tool, Comprehensive Online Data Entry (CODE), to calculate payouts in a timely and consistent manner, which is essential to educator trust in the system.

Fourth, Individual Growth Plans (IGP) for teachers are also essential for success. Each teacher develops an IGP leading to goal-based evaluation and a constant use of data. Brenda Romines, principal at Clinton Elementary School, credits the IGPs with “individualizing professional development for teachers . . . it opens doors for teachers to work together to grow, reflect, and learn to provide the best results for our kids.”

Challenges, Sustainability, and Implications

Educators and policymakers have overcome several key challenges in the implementation of TIF grants. First, there was a need to gain the cooperation and collaborative spirit of teachers who were distrustful of a performance-pay initiative. With the assistance of the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, supportive principals, state officials, and strong master and mentor teachers, the grant sites were able to overcome this challenge by demonstrating to teachers that TAP was a comprehensive model of school supports—not just a system of bonuses. Over the course of the first year of implementation, master teachers worked alongside career teachers to teach lessons. This gave the TAP system credibility and the support it needed to thrive.

Second, principals discussed the need to identify teachers with the greatest ability to teach students and work with adults. Several administrators emphasized that master and mentor teachers should not be selected for their loyalty, longevity, or even solely on their ability to improve student test scores. These key positions need to be filled by people that can communicate effectively with students and teachers.

“I was able to put a down payment on a house because I am an effective teacher.”

Third, as South Carolina faces budget cuts, TIF sites are looking to creatively sustain their programs. Because South Carolina has a state TAP model, it has increased flexibility in how it repurposes resources. Having a state-level TIF grant has been tremendously beneficial according to state and local educators, due in part to the fiscal flexibility afforded by housing TIF in the state department. With 14 schools in the state already making TAP work without TIF money, South Carolina is proving that its efforts to support teachers with multiple evaluations, professional development, career advancement, and performance

pay can be sustained beyond TIF. Federal Title I and Title II and state funds can support initiatives such as TAP, in addition to marshalling additional resources from outside funders.

What TIF Means to Teachers and Students

John Hurley is a gifted science teacher at Carver Middle School and consistently receives top ratings on evaluations. His students annually post top value-added scores. He noted the power of performance pay after one year where he received a particularly high bonus of over \$11,000. “I was able to put a down payment on a house because I am an effective teacher.” His success has not bred jealousy in his school, but instead has added significantly to his credibility as a fourth-year teacher. He said, “I think it is rare to have a 25-year teaching veteran coming to ask a second, third or fourth-year teacher what it is that he is doing with the desire to learn from him. TAP has given me that credibility and chance to help others grow.” He also believes that “no good teacher opposes a program like TAP where your growth as a professional is supported and recognized. People that do not want to do the hard work of examining practice and growing as professionals should not be teaching anyway.”

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM (TEXAS TAP)

| MEASURE | DATA |
|---|--|
| Number of districts in the state | 1,200 ¹⁸ |
| Number of TIF schools '08-'09 | 27 TIF schools in 7 Texas districts: 21 Elementary; 7 Middle; 3 High; 1 Middle/High; 1 Elementary/Middle/High |
| Characteristics of TIF schools | 67% of students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. More than 60% Hispanic with a high concentration having limited English proficiency |
| Impact on students in TIF schools | 20 of 36 schools achieved value-added scores significantly above a year of growth. The average growth for all Texas TAP schools was 1 standard error above a year of growth. |
| Impact on teachers in TIF schools | 73% of Texas TAP teachers indicate that TAP helped them develop professionally and improve as an educator. Over 84% of Texas TAP teachers indicate that TAP changed their instructional practices. |
| Bonus range for teachers and principals (2008-09) | Teachers: \$525-\$5,430 Principals: \$300-\$4,000 |
| Average teacher salary in Texas (2008-09) | \$47,159 ¹⁹ |
| TIF Grant Award | \$25.7 million |

Context

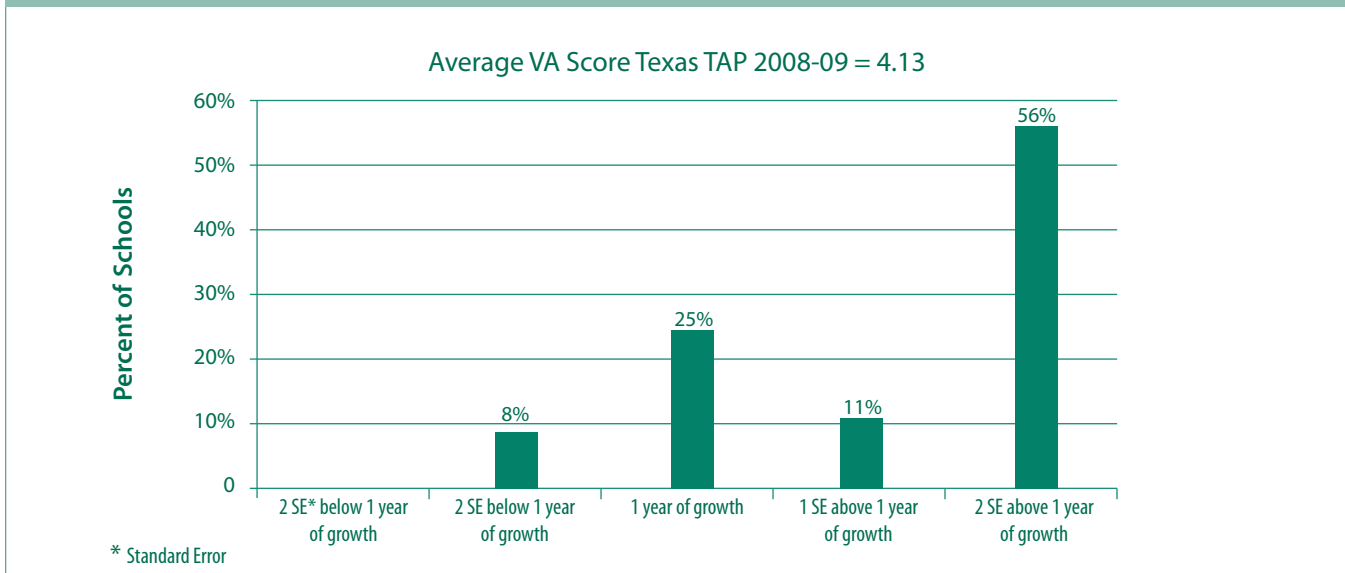
This TIF grant is a unique partnership between the University of Texas, the Texas Education Agency, and the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. The Texas TAP team is housed at the University of Texas and provides support to the TIF sites as well as other TAP sites across the state. Like other TAP sites around the country, multiple evaluators, including master and mentor teachers, evaluate teachers multiple times a year using the TAP evaluation rubric. Additionally, Texas TAP uses value-added measures provided by EVAAS. These measures determine incentive pay, career advancement, and professional development for teachers. The TAP evaluation is the approved state evaluation for Texas TAP schools.

For teacher performance bonuses, the teacher's skills, knowledge, and responsibilities as measured by the evaluation score count for 50%, classroom value-added scores based on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) account for 30%, and school-wide value-added gains on TAKS account for the final 20%. For teachers who do not have classroom level value-added scores, evaluation scores count for 50%, and school-wide value-added gains count for 50%. Bonuses for teachers range from \$525 to \$5,430. Bonuses for principals range from \$300-\$4,000 and are based on fidelity of implementation and school-wide value-added gains. For the 2009-10 school year, Texas TAP was implemented in 36 schools with 27 of those schools funded through TIF.

Impact

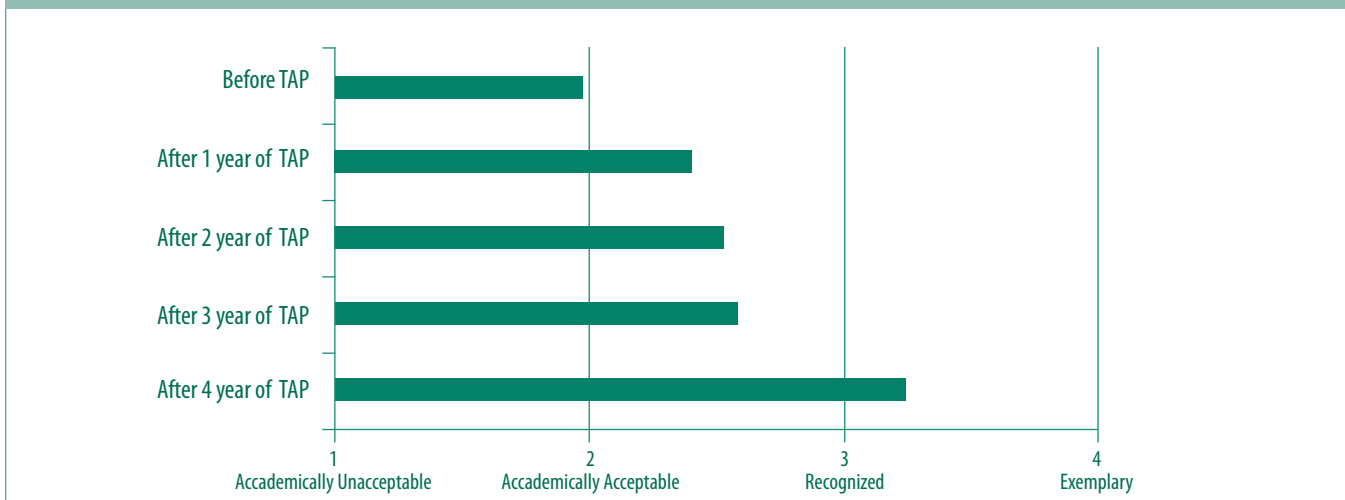
Students in Texas TAP schools are averaging significantly above (more than one standard error) a year's expected growth. The average growth in reading and math on the TAKS for 2008-09 for all Texas TAP schools was 4.13 on a 5-point scale (A year's expected growth is a "3"). Of the 36 TAP schools, 20 scored value-added "5s" which means that those schools achieved over two standard errors above a year's growth (See Figure 7).

Figure 7: Texas TAP Value-Added for 2008-09



In addition to excellent value-added growth, Texas TAP schools are demonstrating dramatic improvement on their school accountability ratings (See Figure 8). Texas rates its schools at four levels: “exemplary,” “recognized,” “academically acceptable” and “academically unacceptable.” After four years of TAP implementation, these ratings averaged across all TAP schools have risen from just below “academically acceptable” to well above “recognized.” The growth is relatively steady across the four years, with a fairly significant increase between the third and fourth years of implementation.

Figure 8: Texas TAP’s Impact on State Accountability School Ratings: All Texas TAP Schools



Texas TAP is making a difference in individual schools beyond student achievement scores. Audelia Creek Elementary increased its teacher retention rate from 33% to 92% after the second year of TAP implementation. Thurgood Marshall Elementary and Forest Meadow Junior High increased their retention rates from 36% to 87% and 56% to 80% respectively. On the 2008-09 annual TAP survey, over 73% of Texas TAP teachers indicated that TAP helped them develop professionally and improve as an educator. Additionally, over 84% of Texas TAP teachers indicated that TAP changed their instructional

practices. Over 88% of Texas TAP teachers indicated there was positive collegiality at their school. A teacher at Crockett Elementary in Bryan ISD describes what TAP has done for school culture. “TAP has brought the faculty together. It has united us. The techniques we learn in cluster are used at each grade level, from kindergarten to grade 5. It has made me feel like a stronger teacher. Even with 34 years of experience, I can learn new techniques.”

Reasons for Success

Fidelity to the model, dedicated leadership, and a desire to grow professionally define the success stories in Texas TAP. Lucy Larrison, a Bryan ISD assistant superintendent, describes her formula, “TAP + dedicated leadership + district support = SUCCESS. After only one year of implementation, many of our TAP schools have changed their end-of-year conversations from, ‘We were almost there’ to ‘We did it!’ TAP has led the way for the district to make meaningful improvements in teacher quality and promote student success.”

Michael Savage, principal of Audelia Creek Elementary School, has facilitated remarkable success. After having been plagued with the highest office referral rate in the district and abysmal student achievement, in 2005 Savage embraced TAP prior to TIF money even being available. The school has moved from nearly “academically unacceptable” to receiving the highest rating of “exemplary” in four years. Savage describes the reason for that success. “The key is that everybody bought in or left. We lost 35 teachers of our 55 teachers when we decided to implement TAP. The turnover was a good thing because I got people in that wanted to be part of TAP. I was looking for people that were up for a challenge. Over the next years we lost a few teachers. But then teachers started to come because they were able to advance through the instructional leadership pipeline we had created.”

The reason why TAP has made such a difference is clear in the way Savage describes how teachers learn to support their students. “In our site-based learning groups, we focus on what the kids need. Master teachers take back to teachers what they need and they analyze student work in their cluster meetings. Master and mentor teachers work with small groups of teachers and students constantly. In the post-conference, the evaluator focuses on reinforcement. We only talk about the one thing that the teacher did really well. Then you go to the refinement, one thing that he or she didn’t do as well as you thought. Three different people observe, and this feedback leads to continuous growth.”

Challenges, Sustainability, and Implications

One of the primary challenges that school leadership teams face in Texas TAP is balancing district and state mandates and TAP. For example, TAP includes a rigorous evaluation component that is the foundation for professional development. Texas TAP schools use the TAP evaluation as their state required teacher evaluation. Over time principals have found that when they share the practices they are using in their TAP schools with district leaders, the TAP practices are adopted. Yet in some districts, other evaluation forms and systems still exist that overlap in practice with TAP.

From the perspective of Tammy Kreuz, Texas TAP director, turnover in key positions at the district level has created some challenges. Several changes in the superintendent position led to a loss of districts from TAP, actually decreasing the number of schools participating in Texas TAP for 2009-10 from 36 to 33. However, Texas TAP will be adding 12 schools for 2010-11. If TAP were an approved school-turnaround model in Texas, this might also increase the likelihood of sustainability over time, as the school turnaround resources would be available.

“TAP has brought the faculty together. It has united us. The techniques we learn in cluster are used at each grade level, from kindergarten to grade 5. It has made me feel like a stronger teacher. Even with 34 years of experience, I can learn new techniques.”

While sustainability is a concern in Texas as in all of the other sites, the unique structure of Texas TAP within the University of Texas, in addition to Texas' investment in performance pay, offer some distinct advantages over other states with regard to sustainability. For 2010-11, Texas is investing \$200 million in District Awards for Teacher Excellence funds that can be used for TAP. Additionally, federal Title I and Title II dollars have been repurposed to sustain Texas TAP. Texas TAP is developing leadership capacity in its schools, at the university, and at the state level to continue to sustain these efforts.

What TIF Means to Teachers and Students

Michael Savage describes a teacher that improved within the TAP structure. "We got him a few years ago. He came from a Catholic school and was an okay teacher. He had the basics and a desire to learn and grow. Sometimes his test scores were not the best, but through TAP, we saw him grow. He moved into a mentoring position and did very well. Multiple people evaluated him and he made the cut. Now, he is a master teacher and has applied to be an assistant principal. I am probably going to lose him." However, Audelia Creek's loss will be another school's gain thanks to the pipeline of instructional leadership that TAP has provided.

CONCLUSIONS: CHANGING SCHOOL CULTURES AND IMPROVING STUDENT OUTCOMES

The student achievement results in these six sites confirm the impact of the student-focus exemplified in their approach. In the schools where the various programs are being implemented with fidelity, student achievement is improving, and in some cases remarkably. Audelia Creek Elementary in Texas is one such “exemplary” model. In addition to their success in math and reading, in 2004, the year prior to TAP implementation, 19% of its economically disadvantaged fifth-graders passed the state science test. In 2009, 88% of the school’s economically disadvantaged fifth-graders passed.

A visit to Amphitheater High School in Tucson, Arizona reveals the power of a comprehensive approach to educator compensation and supports. ELL teachers analyze and log common errors in the writing of high, middle, and low performing students and discuss strategies of how to move students forward. English teachers are discussing rubrics to measure the growth that students make toward standards. A biology teacher, an art teacher, a math teacher, a chemistry teacher, and an instructional support leader are analyzing and discussing student work to help move students forward.

Across all sites, student achievement is on the rise. The fact that all six sites employ a value-added model provides them with richer data than status proficiency scores can provide. These sites know which students are growing at which rates. More importantly, because of the job-embedded supports, analysis of data and targeted instructional strategies, schools understand how to move these students to higher achievement levels.

While more in-depth analysis of how best to compensate and support teachers is needed, these TIF projects illustrate the impact of tying student achievement goals to compensation systems and supports for teachers and principals. The fundamental value of the initiatives taking place in New Orleans, Tucson, Guilford County, Philadelphia, South Carolina and Texas is that they are innovative attempts to change the way schools support educators and they are tracking their results. More of these initiatives are needed given the abundant research showing that teacher effectiveness has the single greatest school-level impact on student learning.²⁰ None of these sites claim to have all of the answers, but they do have some.

A teacher summed up why these initiatives are so important:

Everybody says that public education is a priority in this country, and that we are not where we should be. Teacher quality is the number one factor influencing student achievement. We need to invest more, not less, in developing teachers and rewarding teachers that are improving student achievement. If we do this successfully, we are going to attract very bright, professional people to the field who are going to see teaching as a viable option. I think there are a number of people who would like to be teachers, but the respect and the money are not there. Systems that offer incentives and supports can change that by attracting and developing the types of teachers our students need.

— Chris Young, 6th grade teacher, William J. Fischer Accelerated Academy, ACSA,
New Orleans, LA

APPENDIX A: COMPARISON OF FEATURES OF SIX TIF SITES

| | | <i>Algiers, LA</i> | <i>Amphitheater USD, AZ</i> | <i>Guilford County, NC</i> | <i>Philadelphia Charter Schools, PA</i> | <i>South Carolina TAP</i> | <i>Texas TAP</i> |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---|---------------------------|------------------|
| Professional Development | Job-embedded | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| | Collaborative teacher groups - clusters | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| | Student work regularly examined in clusters | • | • | | • | • | • |
| | Field-testing of lessons by master/mentor teachers | • | | | • | • | • |
| | Significant principal involvement | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Evaluation | Differentiated evaluation results for teachers | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| | At least four evaluations of all teachers | • | • | | • | • | • |
| | Multiple evaluators | • | • | | • | • | • |
| | Classroom assessments considered for student achievement | | • | | | | |
| | Classroom-level value-added model | • | • | • | | • | • |
| Performance Compensation | Classroom-level payouts | • | • | • | | • | • |
| | School-level payouts | • | • | | • | • | • |
| | Differentiated pay based on student achievement (50% or more of evaluation) | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| | Principal performance pay | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Career Advancement | Master teachers (full release and additional compensation) | • | • | | • | • | • |
| | Mentor / Coaches (partial or full release and additional compensation) | • | • | | • | • | • |
| | Advancement based on contribution to student learning and ability to work with adults | • | • | | • | • | • |

APPENDIX B: TENETS OF TAP:

TAP™ Elements of Success



TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement was developed by the Milken Family Foundation and is now operated by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET). Detailed information about TAP, NIET, and the sites nationwide implementing the TAP system can be found at www.tapsystem.org. The elements listed below provide a framework for the TAP system.

MULTIPLE CAREER PATHS offer teachers powerful opportunities for greater responsibility with commensurate pay. This typically means having career teachers, mentor teachers, and master teachers. Career teachers are typical classroom instructors. Mentor teachers are classroom instructors who also hold some coaching and mentoring

responsibilities and serve on the school's instructional leadership team. Master and mentor teachers are selected by showing sustained student achievement as well using their ability and leadership to coach peer teachers.

ONGOING APPLIED PROFESSIONAL GROWTH allows teachers continuous, on-site development opportunities focused on the needs of their students to enhance their overall effectiveness in their craft. This professional development is designed by the leadership team and occurs during the school day. It is designed around the immediate implementation of identified vetted strategies that have proven success.

INSTRUCTIONALLY FOCUSED ACCOUNTABILITY is represented by fair evaluations based on clearly defined, research-based standards. The rubric-based observation and evaluation system allows this process to be a professional growth opportunity rather than a bureaucratic process. Teachers are observed a minimum of four times throughout the school year by certified, trained evaluators.

PERFORMANCE-BASED COMPENSATION allows for salaries and performance incentives to be tied to responsibilities, instructional performance, and student achievement results. Performance incentives are given to teachers based on a value-added approach to student achievement within the teachers' classroom, as a whole school and on their instructional performance. Typically, each incentive is weighted and grouped together for the total performance-based compensation.

APPENDIX C: ALGIERS PRINCIPAL EVALUATION COMPONENTS

| Implementation Year | Effectiveness of TAP Implementation (Fidelity of implementation) | | | School-Wide Student Achievement Gains | | | Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education | | |
|---------------------|---|--------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--|--------------|-------------------------------|
| | Allocation Percentage | Award Level* | School Review Score | Allocation Percentage | Award Level* | School Value-Added Score | Allocation Percentage | Award Level* | VAL ED Score** |
| 1 | 25% | Level 3 | 2.75 (\$1250) | 50% | Level 3 | 3.0 (\$2500) | 25% | Level 3 | 75-79.9 percentile (\$1250) |
| | | Level 4 | 3.0 (\$1875) | | Level 4 | 4.0 (\$3750) | | Level 4 | 80 – 89.9 percentile (\$1875) |
| | | Level 5 | 3.5 (\$2500) | | Level 5 | 5.0 (\$5000) | | Level 5 | 90 -99 Percentile (\$2500) |
| 2 | 25% | Level 3 | 3.0 (\$1250) | 50% | Level 3 | 3.0 (\$2500) | 25% | Level 3 | 75-79.9 percentile (\$1250) |
| | | Level 4 | 3.5 (\$1875) | | Level 4 | 4.0 (\$3750) | | Level 4 | 80- 89.9 percentile (\$1875) |
| | | Level 5 | 4.0 (\$2500) | | Level 5 | 5.0 (\$5000) | | Level 5 | 90-99 percentile (\$2500) |
| 3 and beyond | TBD | Level 3 | 3.0 (\$1250) | 50% | Level 3 | 3.0 (\$2500) | 25% | Level 3 | 75-79.9 percentile (\$1250) |
| | | Level 4 | 4.0 (\$1875) | | Level 4 | 4.0 (\$3750) | | Level 4 | 80-89.9 percentile (\$1875) |
| | | Level 5 | 4.5 (\$2500) | | Level 5 | 5.0 (\$5000) | | Level 5 | 90-99 percentile (\$2500) |

*Level 5 = 100% of award allocation, Level 4 = 75% of award allocation, Level 3 = 50% of award allocation, Level 2 and Level 1 = no award

**The percentile rank is provided by interpreting a principal's total score on the VAL-ED instrument, core component, and key process effectiveness ratings against a national representative sample that included principals, supervisors, and teachers.

APPENDIX D: AMPHITHEATER STUDENT GROWTH SCORES

A value-added growth analysis using MAP test scores matched at the student level was developed for Project EXCELL! The following linear regression model is used to predict academic growth for students. This model was run separately for reading and mathematics and for each grade 2 through 9. Each model for grades 3-8 was constructed using two baseline years (2005-06 and 2006-07). The two baseline years of regression coefficients for each subject and grade were averaged together for parameter stability. The analyses also include parameter adjustments to correct for regression to the mean effects. For grade 9, 2007-08 was the baseline.

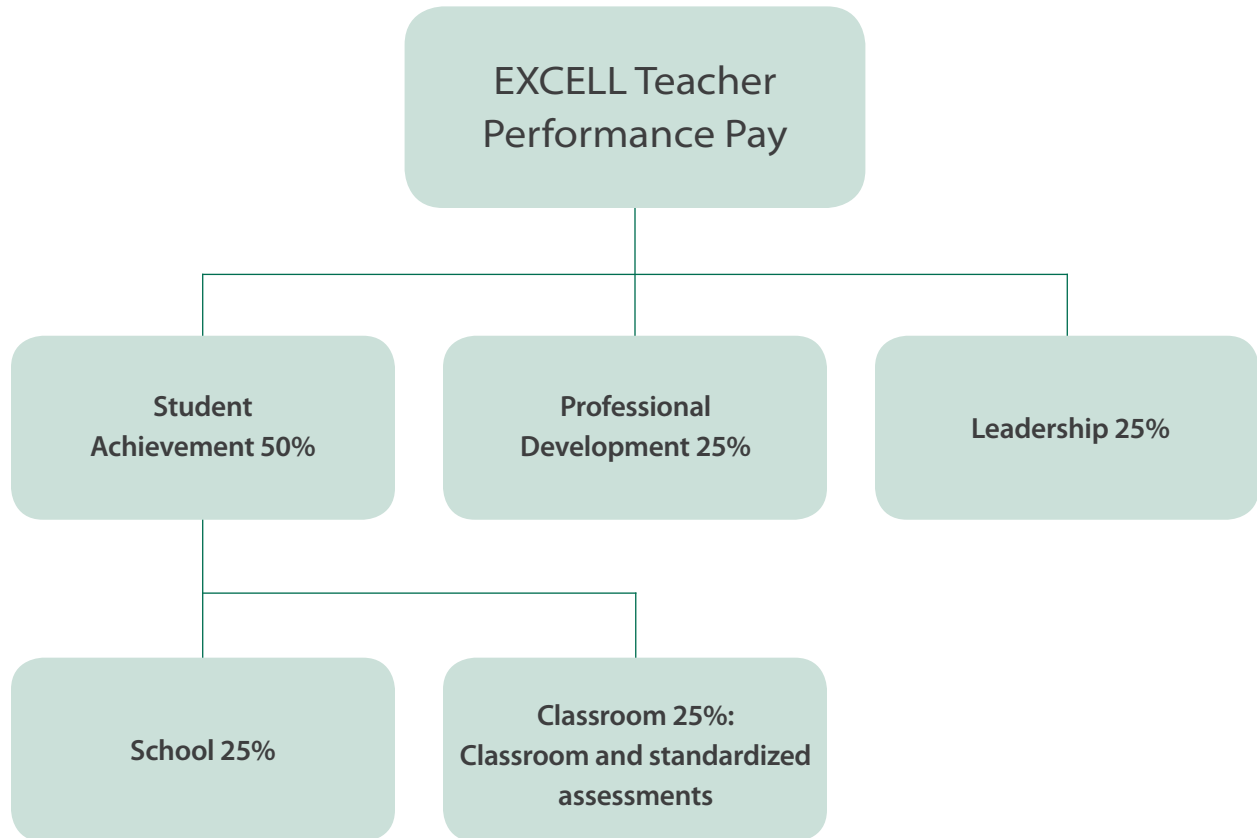
| | |
|--|--|
| $RIT\ POST = B_0 + B_1 (RIT\ PRE) + B_2 (SES) + B_3 (SPED) + B_4 (ELL) + B_5 (MOBILE) + e$ | |
| RIT POST : | Each students' predicted spring RIT score |
| B_0 : | A growth constant for each model |
| B_1 (RIT PRE): | Adjusts the predicted growth based on the pre-measure (fall RIT score). Students with low starting scores are expected to grow more than students with high starting scores |
| B_2 (SES): | Adjusts the predicted growth based on performance of students from low socioeconomic families |
| B_3 (SPED): | Adjusts the predicted growth based on performance of students who receive special education services |
| B_4 (ELL): | Adjusts the predicted growth based on performance of students who are English language learners |
| B_5 (MOBILE): | Adjusts the predicted growth based on performance of students who are mobile |
| e : | Error for each model |

To determine if each student's growth is better than predicted, a residual is computed as the difference between the observed and predicted post scores.

$$\text{Student growth residual} = (\text{Observed}_{\text{Spring RIT}}) - (\text{Predicted}_{\text{Spring RIT}})$$

Residuals near 0 indicate that the student's actual growth is close to predicted growth. Positive residuals indicate that the growth is better than predicted and negative residuals indicate that the growth is lower than predicted.

APPENDIX E: AMPHITHEATER PERFORMANCE-PAY STRUCTURE FOR TEACHERS



APPENDIX F: GUILFORD COUNTY ATTRITION DATA BY SCHOOL: PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY LOST PER YEAR

| SCHOOL | 2006-2007** | 2007-2008 | 2008-2009 | IMPROVEMENT |
|------------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| Bessemer* | * | 19.4% | 20.0% | -0.6% |
| Cone* | * | 7.4% | 10.3% | -2.9% |
| Fairview | 43.5% | 18.9% | 3.2% | +40.3% |
| Falkener* | * | 25.0% | 13.9% | +11.1% |
| Foust | 23.8% | 47.6% | 9.4% | +14.4% |
| Gillespie Park | 11.1% | 17.6% | 23.5% | -12.4% |
| Hampton Academy | 25.0% | 26.1% | 20.0% | -5.0% |
| Kirkman Park | 40.0% | 23.1% | 7.7% | +32.3% |
| Oak Hill | 45.5% | 13.8% | 12.5% | +33.0% |
| Parkview | 16.0% | 25.0% | 6.9% | +9.1% |
| Union Hill* | * | 19.0% | 5.6% | +13.4% |
| Washington | 7.7% | 12.0% | 5.6% | +2.1% |
| Wiley | 37.5% | 30.8% | 5.0% | +32.5% |
| Allen* | * | 25.9% | 25.0% | +0.9% |
| Aycock* | * | 38.7% | 13.6% | +25.1% |
| Ferndale | 47.1% | 50.0% | 15.0% | +32.1% |
| Hairston | 30.4% | 53.3% | 29.4% | +1% |
| Jackson | 28.6% | 30.4% | 7.7% | +20.9% |
| Penn-Griffin* | * | 18.2% | 23.5% | -5.3% |
| Welborn | 42.1% | 41.2% | 20.0% | +22.1% |
| Academy at HP Central* | * | 0.0% | 25.0% | -25% |
| Academy at Smith | 0.0% | 25.0% | 0.0% | 0% |
| Andrews | 30.8% | 12.5% | 17.6% | +13.2% |
| Dudley | 16.0% | 20.0% | 14.3% | +1.7% |
| Eastern | 0.0% | 20.0% | 11.1% | -11.1% |
| HP Central | 29.6% | 21.7% | 4.5% | +25.1% |
| MC at Bennett | 25.0% | 16.7% | 50.0% | -25% |
| MC at NC A&T | 0.0% | 25.0% | 16.7% | -16.7% |
| Smith | 25.0% | 19.2% | 15.4% | +9.6% |
| Southern | 11.1% | 33.3% | 20.0% | -8.9% |
| TOTAL | 29% | 30% | 11.7% | +17.3% |
| DISTRICT TOTAL | 13% | 16% | 12.8% | +0.2% |

* Did not become Mission Possible until the 2007-2008 school year

**Data is measured at the end of the school year noted. For example, the District total turnover as measured at the end of the 2006-07 school year was 13%.

APPENDIX G: BASIS OF EVALUATION AND BONUSES IN SOUTH CAROLINA TAP SCHOOLS

| <i>Educator</i> | <i>Criterion 1</i> | <i>Criterion 2</i> | <i>Criterion 3</i> |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| K-8 teacher – tested subject area | 50% SKR | 30% class value-added | 20% school value-added |
| K-8 teacher – non-tested subject area or grade | 50% SKR | | 50% school value-added |
| 9-12 teacher – with end-of-course exam | 50% SKR | | 50% HSAP-first-time and longitudinal, on-time graduation rate |
| 9-12 teacher – no end-of-course exam | 50% SKR | | 50% HSAP-first-time and longitudinal, on-time graduation rate |
| K-8 principal | 75% fidelity of implementation | | 25% on value-added growth |
| 9-12 principal | 75% fidelity of implementation | | 25% HSAP-first-time and longitudinal, on-time graduation rate |

Measures of teacher impact on student learning vary between schools and teachers. For all the TAP sites, teachers are evaluated four to six times per year by three different evaluators who have gone through eight days of training in the use of the same evaluation tool, culminating in an SKR score. The training of the evaluators creates a high degree of inter-rater reliability, and the SKR score accounts for 50% of a teacher’s evaluation. If teachers are in a grade level with state assessment, 30% of their evaluations and subsequent bonuses are based on their classes’ growth on those assessments, and 20% is based on school-wide growth. If teachers are in an untested grade level or subject area, 50% of their bonuses are based on school-wide value-added growth. At the high school level in South Carolina, bonuses are based on end-of-course exams, first-time passage rate of the High School Assessment Program (HSAP), the longitudinal passage rate of the HSAP, and the high schools on-time graduation rate. SCTAP Principals receive 25% of their bonuses on value-added growth measured in multiple ways as described above and 75% based on the quality of TAP implementation in their schools.

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