

NIET

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

TAP Research Summary

Examining the Evidence and Impact of *TAP: The System for Teacher
and Student Advancement*

March 2014

TAP Research Summary

Researchers at NIET and elsewhere have studied the effectiveness of *TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement* (TAP) in raising student achievement, improving the quality of instruction and increasing the ability of high-need schools to recruit, retain and support effective teachers. This document describes some of the most important results that have emerged from the research to date. Data collection and analysis efforts are ongoing, and the findings described here will be updated as new information becomes available.

Table of Contents

NIET Mission	3
<i>TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement</i> Description	3
Best Practices Center Description	3
TAP Influence in Schools	4
Figure 1: States with TAP	4
TAP Impact in Schools and Districts	4
Figure 2: Percentage of TAP Schools Gaining a Full Year or More of Academic Growth	6
Evaluation of TAP System Across Louisiana	6
Figure 3: Interactive, Inc. Study Finds Louisiana TAP Schools Outperform Matched Schools	7
Figure 4: Interactive, Inc. Study Finds Louisiana TAP Schools Grow More Rapidly	8
Figure 5: Interactive, Inc. Study Finds Louisiana TAP Teachers Improve Instructional Practices	9
TAP’s Classroom Evaluation Measures Across Multiple States	9
Figure 6: Traditional Teacher Evaluation Scores	10
Figure 7: Observational Ratings of Teachers in TAP Schools Differentiate Among Levels of Performance	11
Alignment of TAP’s Observation and Achievement Measures	12
Figure 8: Teacher Observation Scores and Classroom Value Added Scores, 2011-12	12
Figure 9: Teacher Salary Impacts Based on Demonstrated Effectiveness	13
Results from Additional Studies of TAP’s Impact	14
TAP Attitude Survey Responses	15
Figure 10: Level of Reported Collegiality from Teachers in TAP Schools Nationwide	15
Figure 11: Level of Reported Support for Multiple Career Paths from Teachers Nationwide	16
Figure 12: Level of Reported Support for Applied Professional Growth from Teachers Nationwide	16
Figure 13: Level of Reported Support for Instructionally Focused Accountability from Teachers Nationwide	17
Figure 14: Level of Reported Support for Performance-Based Compensation from Teachers Nationwide	17
Principal Survey Results	18
Figure 15: Principal Survey Results on TAP Outcomes in their Schools	18
Figure 16: “The implementation of TAP has helped retain effective teachers at my school.”	18
Common Core Alignment	19
Upcoming Projects	20
Teacher and Administrator Attitude Survey	20
TAP and High School Implementation	21
School Based Teacher Leadership Positions: Finding the Proper Balance	21
Conclusion	21
Acknowledgements	22

NIET Mission

Recognizing that an effective teacher is the most important school-based factor impacting student achievement, the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) is committed to ensuring a highly skilled, strongly motivated, and competitively compensated teacher for every classroom in America. NIET supports states, districts and schools in recruiting, developing, supporting and retaining high-quality human capital in order to raise achievement levels for all students. NIET seeks to accomplish this commitment through its signature initiatives *TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement* and the NIET *Best Practices Center*.

TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement Description

Introduced in 1999, the TAP system has become America's leading comprehensive educator effectiveness model that offers powerful career advancement and leadership opportunities for educators, a fair and transparent evaluation process that is linked to job-embedded professional development and performance-based compensation. Each of these core elements is discussed below. For more information, visit www.tapsystem.org.

- Multiple career paths. In TAP schools, skilled teachers have the opportunity to serve as master and mentor teachers, receiving additional compensation for providing high levels of support to career teachers and increasing instructional effectiveness across the faculty. Master and mentor teachers form a leadership team, along with administrators, to deliver school-based professional support and conduct evaluations with a high level of expertise.
- Ongoing applied professional growth. Led by master and mentor teachers, TAP teachers participate in weekly cluster group meetings where they examine student data, engage in collaborative planning, and learn instructional strategies that have been field-tested in their own schools. Teachers benefit from a national TAP database of instructional strategies and their colleagues' experiences. Professional development continues in the classroom as master teachers model lessons, observe classroom instruction, and support teachers' pedagogical improvement.
- Instructionally focused accountability. TAP teachers are observed in classroom instruction several times a year by multiple trained observers, including principals and master and mentor teachers, using rubrics for several dimensions of instructional effectiveness. Evaluators are trained and certified, and leadership teams monitor the reliability and consistency of evaluations in their schools. These classroom evaluations are complemented by analyzing student achievement growth, rounding out a multi-measure system of teacher evaluation. Evaluation results are used as formative feedback in one-on-one mentoring sessions, and guide planning for cluster group meetings.
- Performance-based compensation. TAP teachers have the opportunity to earn annual bonuses based on their observed skills, knowledge and responsibilities, their students' average achievement growth, and schoolwide achievement growth. Master and mentor teachers receive additional compensation based on their added roles and responsibilities, and principals can earn additional compensation based on schoolwide achievement growth and other measures of effectiveness.

Best Practices Center Description

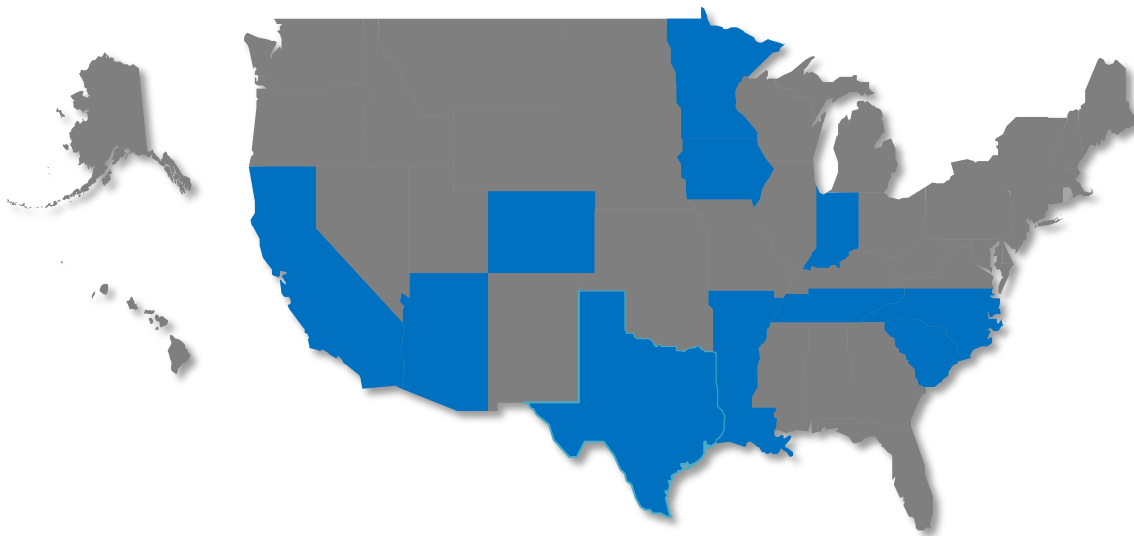
The NIET Best Practices Center (BPC) provides innovative services, support and solutions to schools,

districts and states to improve educator effectiveness. Based on more than a decade of experience in schools across the country, the BPC works with its partners to redesign educator evaluation, deliver effective professional development, implement performance-based compensation systems and train teacher leaders in schools. The BPC offers a network of expert trainers and access to a range of innovative Web-based resources and tools. For more information, visit www.nietbestpractices.org.

TAP Influence in Schools

Since 1999, the TAP system of comprehensive educator effectiveness model has operated across multiple states in hundreds of schools. TAP has grown steadily in the number of schools participating; the majority of which are high-needs schools (over 90% of participating schools). Figure 1 shows the breadth of TAP's influence across the United States.

Figure 1: States with TAP



Blue states = states with TAP schools

TAP Impact in Schools and Districts

The TAP system supports increases in instructional effectiveness across the school and district, and accelerates growth in student academic achievement. The goal is to achieve more rapid academic growth toward rigorous learning standards and close achievement gaps. TAP schools use multiple measures to assess performance, including student learning growth at the classroom and school level, and the effectiveness of instruction. In order to evaluate teacher effectiveness, it is essential to look at learning growth over the school year, so that teachers with students at different levels of proficiency at the beginning of the year have the same opportunity to demonstrate success.

The TAP system, a growing number of state education agencies, and many researchers use a statistical method called "value added" or "growth modeling" to measure the influence of teachers and schools on student achievement during a school year.

This method requires matching each student’s test scores to his or her own previous scores in order to measure the student’s progress during the year—not merely the student’s attainment at the end of the year. Value added separates the impact of a school year on a student from the student’s prior experiences in and out of school, individual characteristics, socioeconomic status, and family conditions. As a result, schools and teachers are accountable for how well they teach rather than how advantaged or disadvantaged their students were at the beginning of the year.

To put it another way, value added tells you how much the school and teacher have contributed to student learning compared to other schools and teachers in the same state with similar students. In TAP, student learning growth is measured on a 1-5 scale, with a 3 representing one year’s growth in student achievement for the students in a school or classroom:¹

- 5: Much more than a year’s growth
- 4: More than a year’s growth
- 3: One year’s growth
- 2: Less than a year’s growth
- 1: Much less than a year’s growth

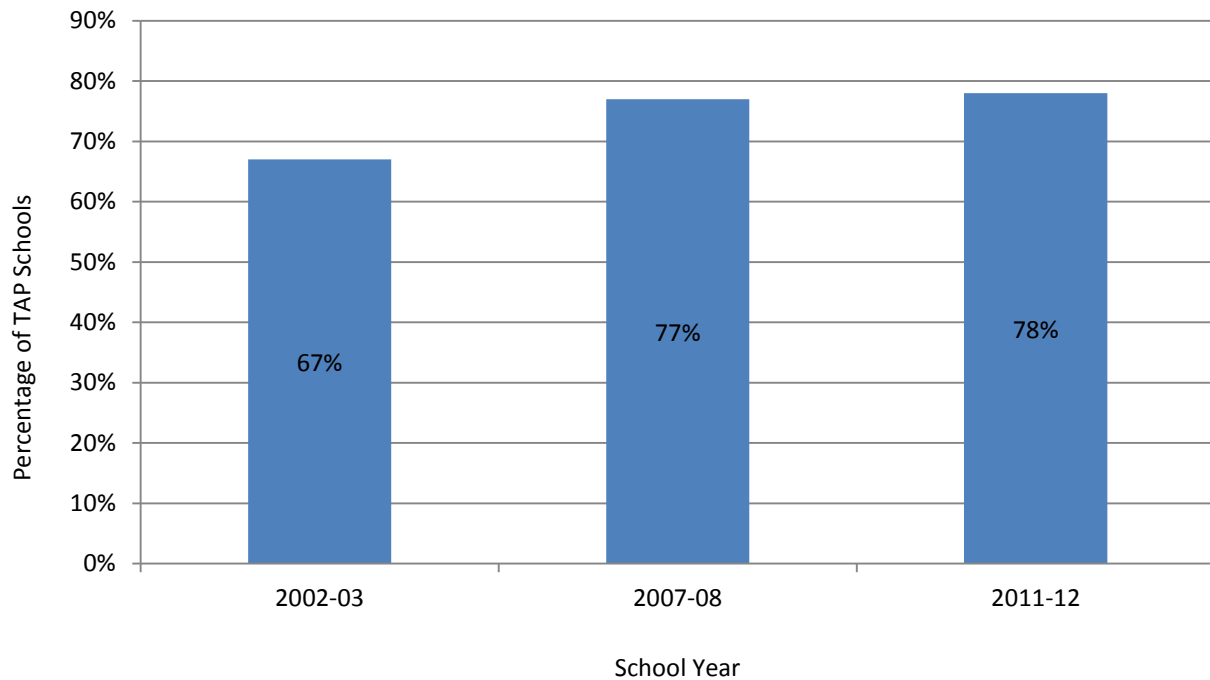
With the increased growth in the TAP system across more states and local education agencies, maintaining impact at scale is an important challenge. Over the previous decade, from 2002-03 through 2012-13, students in approximately three-fourths of the TAP system schools have gained a full year or more of academic growth.

This finding is based on the percentage of schools growing by at least one year or more during the school year, as reflected by scoring a “3” or higher on the schoolwide value-added score. Value-added analysis measures the school’s contribution to student growth within a school year starting from the achievement of each student in prior years. A student who accomplishes a full year of growth in one year must also accomplish a full year of growth in the following year for the school to continue getting the same value-added score for that student. The consistently high schoolwide value added scores across time indicate that TAP schools are meeting or exceeding a year’s growth each school year. Students in these schools are growing in achievement from year to year over multiple years. Consistently strong instructional performance by teachers in all TAP schools results in consistent growth for students.

Figure 2 (below) demonstrates the percentage of schools earning one year or more of academic growth (scoring at least a value-added score of “3”). The high percentages illustrate the significant and sustained achievement levels in TAP schools over the last decade, with an ever increasing percentage of schools obtaining at least a year’s worth of academic growth.

¹ In statistical terms, a 5 is significantly higher than average at about the 95% confidence level, a 4 is significantly higher than average at about the 70% confidence level, a 3 is indistinguishable from the average, a 2 is significantly lower than average at about the 70% confidence level and a 1 is significantly lower than average at about the 95% confidence level. Data for value-added in Reading and Math provided by SAS® EVAAS® or calculated by the state Department of Education employing the respective state growth model.

Figure 2: Percentage of TAP Schools Gaining a Full Year or More of Academic Growth



Beyond the above discussion, another notable success of the TAP system is the expanding preponderance of performance data that comes from examining the impact of the system across various locations and conducted by different researchers².

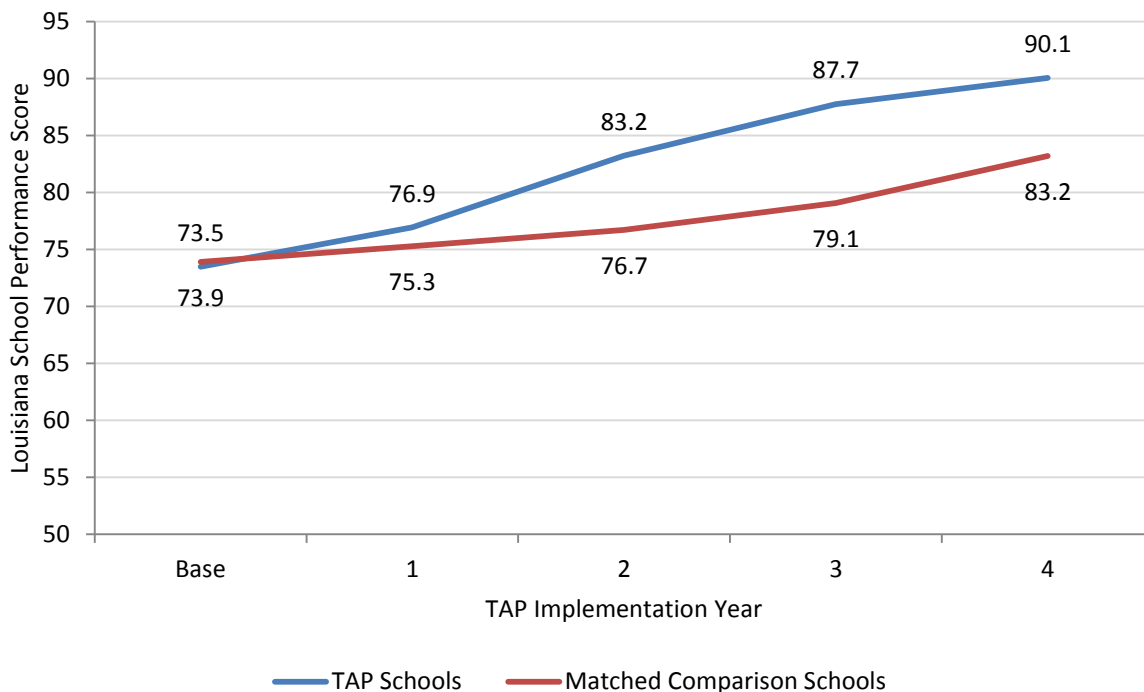
Evaluation of TAP System Across Louisiana

A new study released in fall 2013 evaluated the impact of the TAP system across seventeen schools in Louisiana. The third-party study, *Findings from a Two-Year Examination of Teacher Engagement in TAP Schools across Louisiana*, was conducted by Interactive, Inc., a national firm specializing in education program evaluation. The study of schools from across Louisiana included elementary, middle, and high schools in urban, suburban, and rural communities. The study examined the impact of the TAP system on student achievement and teacher practices.

² Daley, G., & Kim, L. (2010). A teacher evaluation system that works. Santa Monica, CA: National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. Retrieved from http://www.tapsystem.org/publications/wp_eval.pdf; Hudson, S. (2010). The effects of performance-based teacher pay on student achievement. Stanford, CA: Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. Retrieved from <http://siepr.stanford.edu/publicationsprofile/2175>; Schacter, J., Schiff, T., Thum, Y. M., Fagnano, C., Bendotti, M., Solmon, L., Firetag, K., & Milken, L. (2002). The impact of the teacher advancement program on student achievement, teacher attitudes, and job satisfaction. Santa Monica, CA: Milken Family Foundation; Schacter, J., Thum, Y. M., Reifsneider, D., & Schiff, T. (2004). The teacher advancement program report two: Year three results from Arizona and year one results from South Carolina TAP schools. Santa Monica, CA: Milken Family foundation; Solmon, L. C., White, J. T., Cohen, D., & Woo, D. (2007). The effectiveness of the teacher advancement program. Retrieved from http://www.tapsystem.org/pubs/effective_tap07_full.pdf.

To answer the first question, “do students in TAP schools consistently outperform students in similar schools?” student performance was examined alongside matched comparison schools. Figure 3 demonstrates the improvements of the TAP schools over their matched schools in year to year comparisons.

Figure 3: Interactive, Inc.³ Study Finds Louisiana TAP Schools Outperform Matched Schools

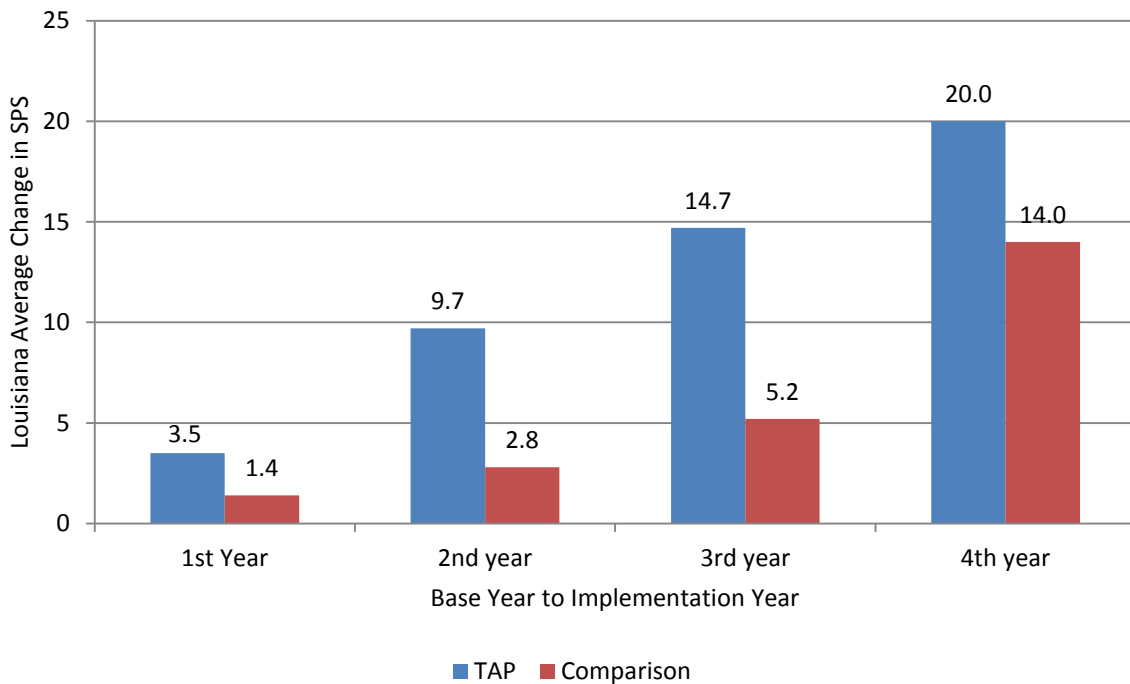


The researchers also examined the growth on the School Performance Score (SPS)⁴ from baseline year through successive years of implementation to determine if the TAP schools were simply improving in a given year or if they improved in each year of TAP implementation. Figure 4 demonstrates that TAP schools have statistically significant improvements for each of the year-to-year comparisons, meaning they grew more than expected each year, while the matched comparison schools do not have any year-to-year statistically significant improvements. For example, as demonstrated in Figure 4, from the baseline year to the second year of implementation, TAP schools improved their School Performance Score by nearly 10 points, while comparison schools improved by an average of 3 points.

³ Mann, D., Leutscher, T., Reardon, R. M. (2013). Findings from a two-year examination of teacher engagement in TAP schools across Louisiana. Retrieved from <http://www.niet.org/assets/PDFs/interactive-louisiana-student-achievement.pdf>

⁴ In Louisiana, School Performance Scores (SPS) are based on student achievement on state standardized tests and additional measures of student success, such as credit accumulation, completion of rigorous courses and graduation. The charts in this section show the difference in scores when comparing the aggregate TAP schools to aggregate matched comparison schools.

Figure 4: Interactive, Inc. Study Finds Louisiana TAP Schools Grow More Rapidly



In addition to the Louisiana Department of Education School Performance Score (SPS) comparisons, aggregate student comparisons were made across content areas for the 2011-2012 students. In the four primary subjects assessed, there was a significant effect of TAP on student performance at the $p < 0.05$ level for the TAP /non- TAP conditions [ELA: $F(1, 6421) = 6.334, p = 0.01$; Mathematics: $F(1, 6421) = 86.39, p = 0.00$; Science: $F(1, 7084) = 31.79, p = 0.00$; Social Studies: $F(1, 7085) = 87.41, p = 0.00$].

What these data demonstrate is that the students in TAP system schools have greater academic performance gains than similar students in similar schools.

To examine the question, “do teachers teach differently in TAP system schools?”, Interactive Inc. conducted focus groups, interviews, surveys, and ping queries (i.e., where real-time data were collected in the moment). Based on the summary of these varied data collection methods, researchers concluded that TAP system teachers “feel supported by the TAP leadership” and they grow in their teaching practices. As reported by the teachers, on any particular day more than 60% of teachers reported using feedback from their evaluations in their classroom instruction, as well as using the TAP standards. More than 50% when asked on any given day responded that they were currently receiving individual classroom coaching.

Figure 5: Interactive, Inc. Study Finds Louisiana TAP Teachers Improve Instructional Practices

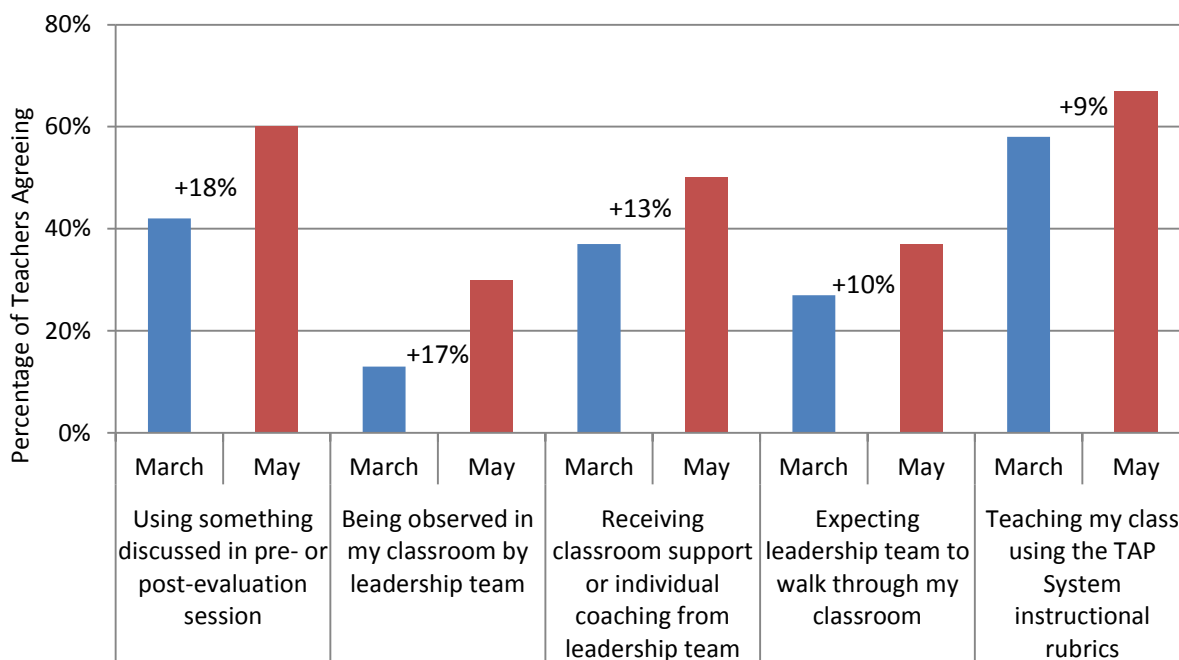


Figure 5 further demonstrates this improvement teachers reported in their behaviors based on real-time work samples collected in March and again in May. Across the three month data collection window, the teachers show a near 50% increase in the percentage using something from a pre-post conference session; similar large percentage increases are demonstrated across each of the other instructional practices, including being observed in their classroom, receiving classroom support, expecting a walkthrough, and teaching their class using the TAP system of instructional rubrics.

TAP’s Classroom Evaluation Measures Across Multiple States

In order to improve the quality of classroom instruction, it is necessary to assess the quality of that instruction. Such assessment is also essential if teachers are to be held accountable for their work and for professional improvement. Traditional school systems have not been successful at measuring and assessing classroom instruction. The New Teacher Project published a revealing report in 2009 showing that schools fail to evaluate their teachers in any meaningful way.⁵ As seen in Figure 6 from their study, by far most teachers were rated at the very highest levels, despite the fact that most schools were not educating their students at these highest levels.

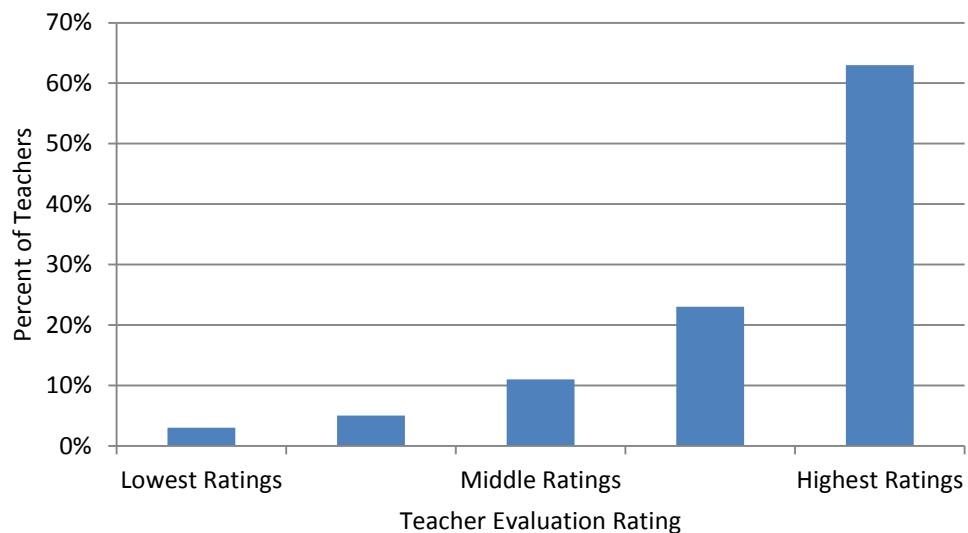
A 2014 report from the National Council on Teacher Quality⁶ indicated that while improvements in educator evaluation have occurred since the 2009 report, still only approximately half of all states require every teacher to be evaluated every year. Also, less than one-third of all states have a process in place to provide certification to teacher evaluators. Given that differences in teacher effectiveness

⁵ Weisberg, D., Sexton, S., Mulhern, J., Keeling, D. (2009). *The Widget Effect: Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness*. Brooklyn, NY: The New Teacher Project. Available online at <http://widgeteffect.org/>

⁶ National Council on Teacher Quality. (2014). *2013 State Teacher Policy Handbook: National Summary*.

represent the single most important school-related factor affecting student learning, accurately measuring differences in teacher performance is critical to the improvement of teaching and learning.

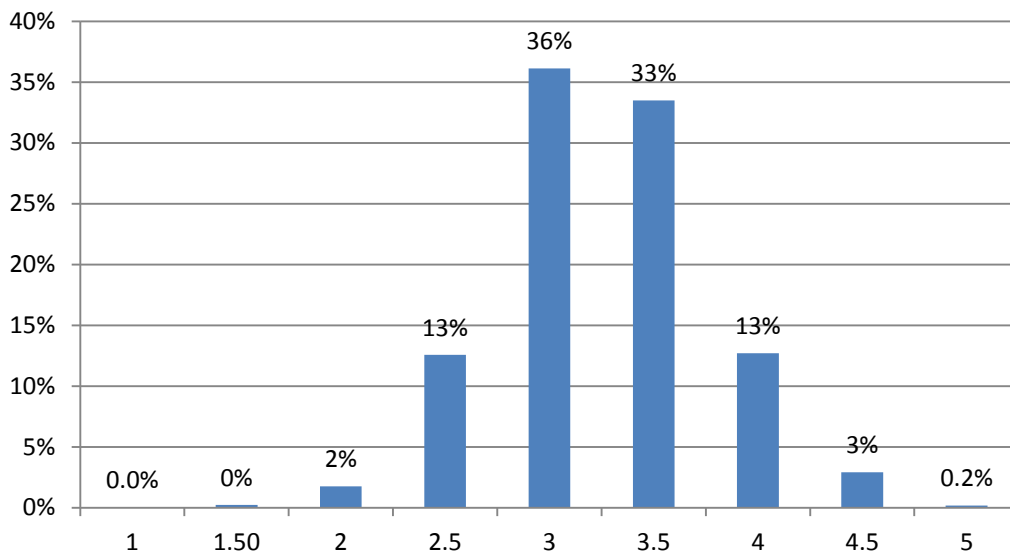
Figure 6: Traditional Teacher Evaluation Scores



Teacher evaluations in five urban school districts, based on data taken from <http://widgeteffect.org/downloads/TheWidgetEffect.pdf>. Scores on 3-point and 4-point scales have been interpolated to a 5-point scale using a cumulative probability density function based on reported data.

In contrast to traditional evaluation methods noted above in Figure 6, TAP has developed a comprehensive approach to teacher evaluation and incentives that depends on multiple measures of both teaching practice and teaching outcomes. This system provides differentiated feedback for teacher improvement, in contrast to the apparently inflated ratings found in many status quo evaluation systems. Figure 7 shows that the observational (i.e., classroom) evaluations of TAP teachers follow a bell-shaped distribution that much more closely matches what we know about how teachers differ from each other in effectiveness. The differentiation in scores offers an important opportunity for more useful feedback to teachers and administrators.

Figure 7: Observational Ratings of Teachers in TAP Schools Differentiate Among Levels of Performance



Note: Teacher Skills, Knowledge, and Responsibilities Distribution of TAP evaluations using 1-5 scale in half-point increments. Figure based on 11,634 teachers and approximately 46,536 observations, 2011-12.

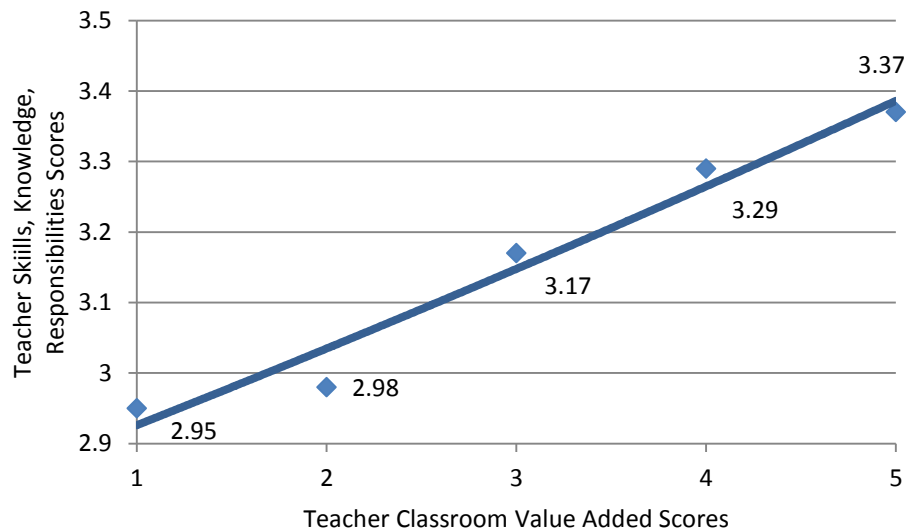
The above ratings are based only on the classroom evaluation component of the TAP system, before considering student learning growth measures. Teachers are observed several times a year by multiple trained and certified raters who consider 19 areas of effective instructional practice. These observers use a multi-dimensional, research-based set of standards and rubrics that are fair, transparent, and curriculum-independent. Results are provided immediately as feedback to the teacher in post-observation mentoring sessions. The scores from all observations of these 19 classroom indicators are combined with seven responsibility indicators at the end of the school year to create an overall Skills, Knowledge, and Responsibilities (SKR) score for each teacher. On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 represents unsatisfactory performance on a certain standard, 3 represents proficiency on that standard, and 5 represents exemplary performance on that standard.

Alignment of TAP's Observation and Achievement Measures

As aforementioned, the TAP system is built upon a clear relationship between improvements in teacher practice translating into improved student achievement. To examine this relationship, a bivariate linear regression analysis was conducted predicting the teacher's Skills, Knowledge, and Responsibilities score from the classroom value added score, resulting in a significant finding, $F(1,4631) = 2959.87$, $p = 0.00$. The correlation between the observation scores and the classroom value added scores was substantially and significantly large, $r = 0.62$. Further, approximately 39% of the variance in the SKR scores was accounted for by the relationship with classroom value added scores.

To represent the relationship between these scores, Figure 8 provides a trend line of how the two variables are related to one another. Using data from nearly 5,000 teachers across nine states, we observe a strong relationship between teacher observation scores and classroom value added scores.

Figure 8: Teacher Observation Scores and Classroom Value Added Scores, 2011-12

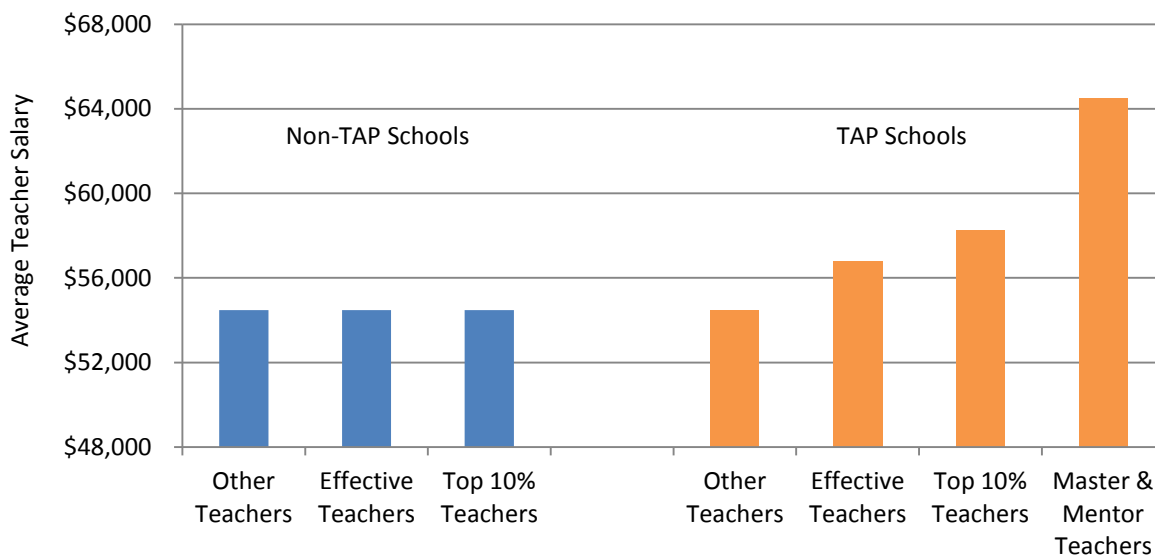


$t(4631) = 54.41$, $p < 0.01$; $r = 0.62$; trend line showing relationship between classroom value-added and teacher skills, knowledge, and responsibilities scores.

Within the TAP system, the culminating result of gains in student achievement and high performance on teacher observation scores is a performance pay amount. To represent this impact, Figure 9 shows how the salary of an effective teacher (defined as obtaining one year or more of student achievement growth and/or being rated as proficient on the TAP Teaching Standards Rubric), a top 10% effective teacher, and a TAP mentor and master teacher compares to all other teachers.

As demonstrated by the left side of the graph, teachers in schools with no additional financial awards for improving the performance of students or improving their own practice as demonstrated by high scores on a teacher observation rubric would receive the same salary (reflected on Figure 9 as the average teacher’s salary nationally). However, on the right side of the graph, we see that in the TAP schools effective teachers can earn an average bonus of approximately \$2,250 (4% of their annual salary), while teachers performing in the top 10% (those growing their students’ performance by significantly more than one year’s growth and demonstrating exemplary classroom practices) earn an average bonus of approximately \$3,750 (7% of their annual salary). Further, in TAP schools, the multiple career paths allow for master and mentor teachers to earn approximately \$10,000 (18% of their annual salary) through their performance bonus and salary augmentation for increased responsibilities.

Figure 9: Teacher Salary Impacts Based on Demonstrated Effectiveness⁷



⁷ Average teacher salary based on reported national average from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012 <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/home.htm>

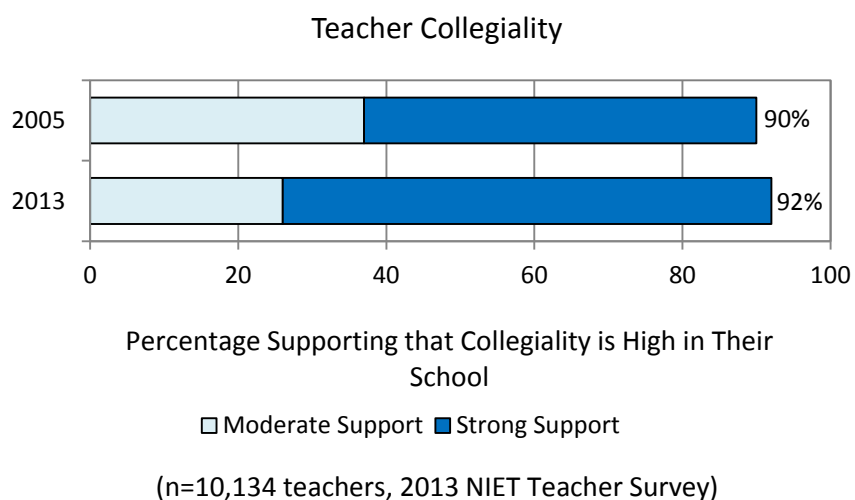
Results from Additional Studies of TAP's Impact

- In 2010, Hudson examined the effect of the TAP system on student achievement across 151 schools in 11 states. Hudson used a statistical control matching method to ensure that the TAP schools and the comparison schools were equivalent prior to the intervention being implemented. Hudson also used a differences-in-differences approach to further account for any differences between the groups and to ensure that the evaluation was able to isolate the impact of the program. Results of the study indicate that students in TAP schools outperformed students in comparison schools by approximately 0.15 standard deviations in mathematics, and smaller effects but in favor of the TAP schools in reading. Hudson explains these findings in context to other education interventions by noting that “the estimated effect of TAP on mathematics achievement is more than twice as large [as class size reduction effects]” (p. 28).
- In 2007, Solmon et al. analyzed the impacts of the TAP system in terms of value-added gain scores across 650 classrooms in six states, including 61 TAP schools and 285 control schools. Researchers analyzed the student achievement gains at two levels of comparison—teacher-to-teacher and school-to-school. To evaluate TAP teachers (and similarly in evaluating TAP schools), researchers calculated the effect of each teacher on student progress as assessed by the difference between the actual average scores of the teacher’s students and the expected average scores of those students (as derived from previous scores). Through this process, researchers created a statistical control group for the TAP teachers based on performance. Results of the study indicate that in every state more TAP teachers demonstrated statistically significant at or above average amount of student achievement growth than control group teachers. Further, TAP schools outperformed their controls in 57% of the categories in math and in 67% of the categories in reading.
- In their 2002 study, Shacter et al., analyzed the growth in achievement of students (n=3,319) whose schools implemented the TAP system compared to the growth of achievement of students (n=7,055) from matched comparison schools. The schools were matched on achievement (percentile rank in Reading, Mathematics, and Language), school size, percent of students eligible for free lunch, school configuration, and location. A statewide cluster analysis was conducted to match the schools. Beyond the matched comparisons, the results in achievement were based on a multi-level value-added model utilizing prior test scores as covariates. Results of the analysis revealed that TAP schools made significantly higher improvements in student achievement gains. Further, this study found that those schools that implemented the TAP system with higher fidelity more significantly outperformed comparison schools.
- In their 2004 follow-up study, Schacter et al. examined the impact of the TAP system across 11 schools. The same cluster level analysis with multi-level multivariate analyses were employed using all available covariates to compare growth between the TAP and control schools. Results from the study indicate that 65% of the TAP schools outperformed their matched controls in reading, language, and mathematics achievement, with the magnitude of change ranging from 6% to 46%. The teacher satisfaction component of this study indicated strong support for the four core principles of the TAP system.

TAP Attitude Survey Responses

Critics of performance incentives for teachers claim that they will result in competitiveness and a loss of collegiality among teachers. Notwithstanding, we find evidence of a high degree of collegiality in TAP schools. In the 2013 TAP national survey of teacher attitudes, 92% of teachers in TAP schools agree with statements reporting a high level of collegiality in their schools, and approximately 70% report strong agreement. This evidence for collegiality has been remarkably high over the last decade, as shown in Figure 10⁸, which indicates that TAP system schools consistently have a collaborative and collegial environment.

Figure 10: Level of Reported Collegiality from Teachers in TAP Schools Nationwide

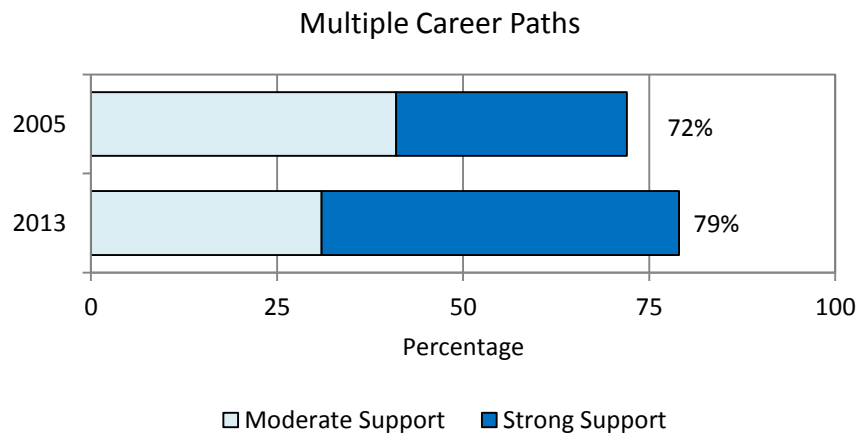


Beyond the overall high levels of reported collegiality within TAP schools, the levels of support for the specific elements of TAP including *multiple career paths*, *ongoing professional growth*, *instructionally focused accountability* and *performance-based compensation* are also high and growing, as shown in Figures 11-14.

A growing number of teachers report that the creation of teacher leader roles in their school has a positive impact on student achievement and school goals. Teacher leaders and administrators form a leadership team that articulates school goals and supports each teacher in developing and achieving their own instructional goals based on their skills and their students' needs. Teacher leadership roles also provide a pathway for teachers to make a greater contribution to the instructional excellence of a school without leaving the classroom.

⁸ The five dimensions represented in this and the next figures are constructed from multiple teacher survey items using factor analysis. Most items in the survey are based on a 5-point Likert scale indicating agreement (1=Not at All and 5=Very Much). For reporting purposes on collegiality and the four TAP elements, the results are presented as Moderate (weighted average of 3 on the items for that factor) and Strong (weighted average of 4 or 5 on the items for that factor).

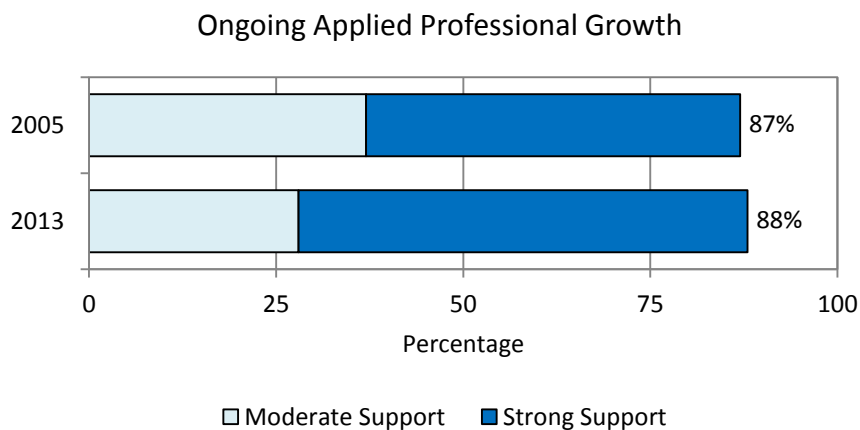
Figure 11: Level of Reported Support for Multiple Career Paths from Teachers Nationwide



(n=10,134 teachers, 2013 NIET Teacher Survey)

In TAP schools, master and mentor teachers lead weekly cluster group meetings where they examine student data, engage in collaborative planning, and discuss instructional strategies that have been field-tested in their own schools. Teachers benefit from access to a national TAP database of instructional strategies and their colleagues' experiences. Professional development continues in the classroom as master teachers model lessons, observe classroom instruction, and support teachers' pedagogical improvement. Figure 12 demonstrates the strong level of support for the professional growth that occurs in TAP schools, and further shows the sustained high level of support.

Figure 12: Level of Reported Support for Applied Professional Growth from Teachers Nationwide

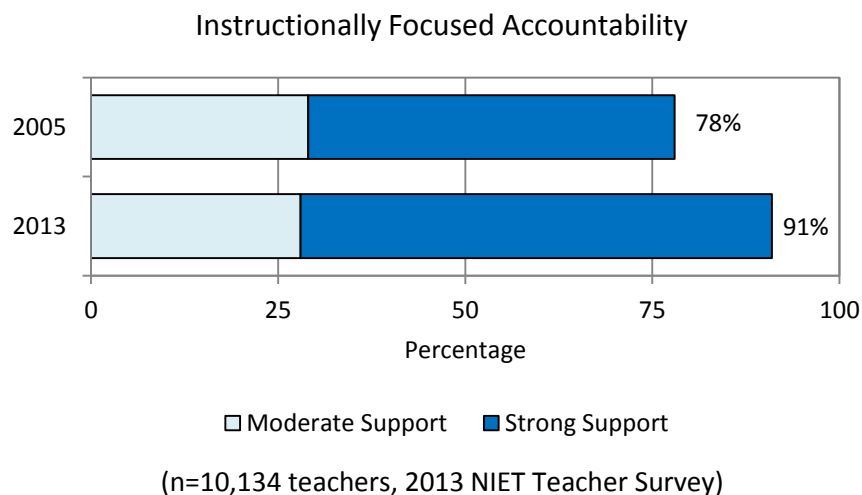


(n=10,134 teachers, 2013 NIET Teacher Survey)

TAP teachers are observed in classroom instruction multiple times a year by multiple trained observers, including principals and master and mentor teachers, using rubrics measuring indicators of instructional effectiveness. Evaluators are trained and certified, and leadership teams monitor the reliability and consistency of evaluations in their schools. These classroom evaluations are complemented by analyzing

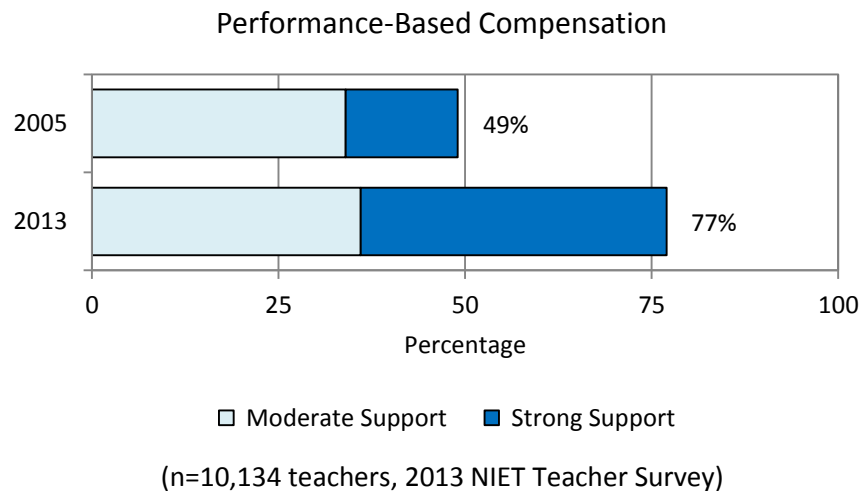
student achievement growth, rounding out a multi-measure system of teacher evaluation. Evaluation results are used as formative feedback in one-on-one mentoring sessions, and guide planning for cluster group meetings. Figure 13 illustrates the strong level of support reported by TAP teachers across the nation.

Figure 13: Level of Reported Support for Instructionally Focused Accountability from Teachers Nationwide



TAP teachers have the opportunity to earn annual bonuses based on their observed skills, knowledge and responsibilities, their students' average achievement growth, and schoolwide achievement growth. Master and mentor teachers receive additional compensation based on their added roles and responsibilities, and principals can earn additional compensation based on schoolwide achievement growth and other measures of effectiveness. Figure 14 demonstrates the level of support for the performance-based compensation system from TAP teachers.

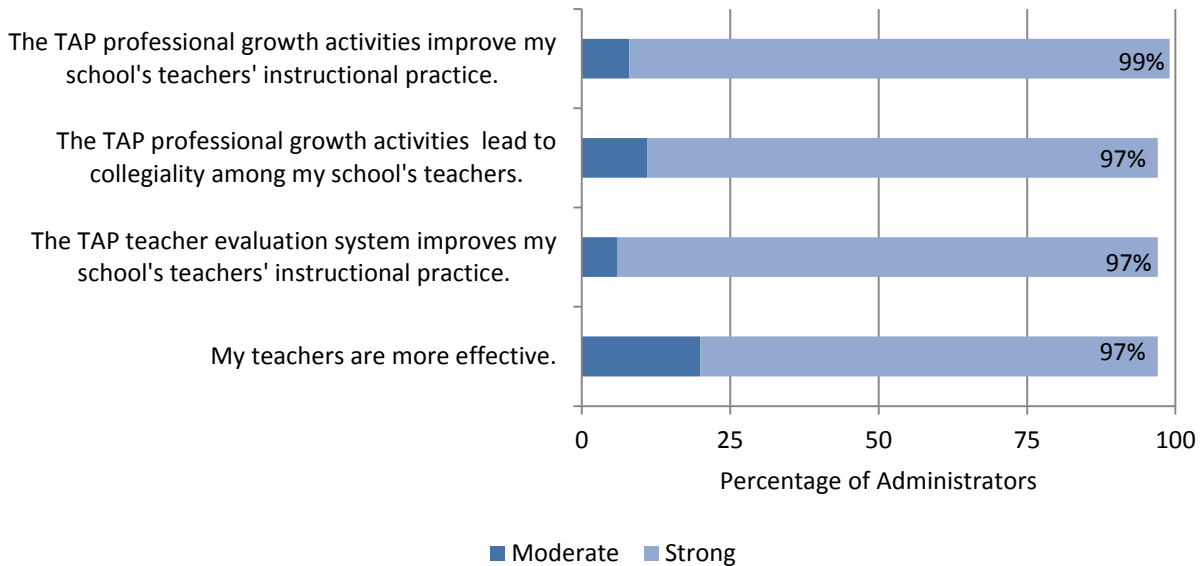
Figure 14: Level of Reported Support for Performance-Based Compensation from Teachers Nationwide



Principal Survey Results

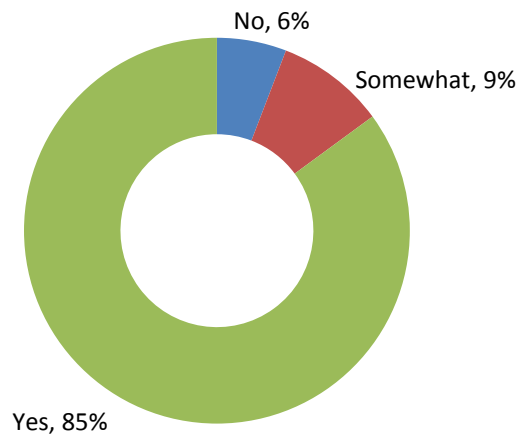
The above substantially positive results from the TAP teacher survey are echoed by the 2013 TAP Principal Survey. As shown in Figure 15, principals have overwhelmingly reported that TAP has a positive effect on collegiality, instructional practices, and teacher effectiveness. Further, as noted on Figure 16, a significant majority of principals (85%) agree that TAP helps retain effective teachers.

Figure 15: Principal Survey Results on TAP Outcomes in their Schools



(n=480 administrators, 2013 NIET Administrator Survey)

Figure 16: "The implementation of TAP has helped retain effective teachers at my school."



(n=480 administrators, 2013 NIET Administrator Survey)

Common Core Alignment

The TAP Teaching Standards are based on research and the work of leading educators and education organizations. In August 2013, NIET released the paper, *Preparing Teachers for the Common Core: Aligning Standards for Teaching with Standards for Learning* describing the alignment between the TAP Teaching Standards and the Common Core State Standards. In Ascension Parish Schools in Louisiana, Superintendent Dr. Patrice Pujol explained how TAP's coaching of teachers is helping them become well-prepared to meet the higher level of expectations.

"TAP has helped us to figure out how we support teachers as they support students to meet new Common Core standards," said Pujol. "We don't just urge them to teach to the Common Core. We support them in developing their own skills and student strategies that specifically meet the new learning targets. We measure student work, and we help them to adjust as needed with the support of coaches that guide the process."

According to the NGA and CCSSO (the organizations that developed the Common Core Standards), "We need standards to ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Common standards will help ensure that students are receiving a high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state. The Common Core standards will provide a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices within and across states that will improve our ability to best serve the needs of students" (2010). The purpose of the Common Core is to provide continuity and alignment of skills for students regardless of where they attend school throughout their career.

Conversations with TAP school sites highlight that the respective theories of TAP and the Common Core are closely aligned. The Common Core Standards help provide schools with a consistent end point, while the TAP Teaching Standards provide teachers with a clear roadmap to arrive at that point. Specifically the TAP Teaching Standards are:

1. Aligned with college and work expectations

The TAP Teaching Standards or "rubrics" assess teacher practices that are aligned to skills needed for students to be successful in higher education and in their careers. For example, the TAP rubrics assess teachers' abilities to teach critical thinking and problem solving, skills that are aligned with college and work expectations. Students in effective TAP teacher classrooms are also exposed to a variety of learning structures, such as grouping, which focuses on collaboration and working effectively with others.

2. Clear, understandable and consistent

The TAP Teaching Standards are a set of clear, transparent, and consistent standards used to evaluate teacher effectiveness. Teachers are trained extensively on the TAP rubrics and there is a continued focus on ensuring inter-rater reliability in evaluations. The TAP system has developed a structure through the school leadership team that ensures every teacher understands the standards.

3. Focused on rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills

The TAP Teaching Standards are rigorous in the application of higher-order skills, particularly in selecting activities and materials for students that are challenging and elicit a variety of thinking. In the TAP rubrics, the indicators of Thinking and Problem Solving challenge students to analyze, compare and contrast, evaluate and explain information. The indicator of Questioning encourages teachers to incorporate questions for their students that are at the knowledge/comprehension, application/analysis, and creation/evaluation levels.

4. Built upon strengths and lessons of current state standards

The TAP Teaching Standards were developed through consultation with numerous educators at the local, state and national levels. The work reviewed included guidelines and standards developed by The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), The National Board for Professional Teacher Standards, Massachusetts' Principles for Effective Teaching, California's Standards for the Teaching Profession, Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support Program, The New Teacher Center's Teacher Induction Program Development, and Danielson's Framework for Teaching.

5. Informed by other top performing countries

The TAP Teaching Standards utilize research drawn from many sources, including international studies (e.g. Harvey-Beavis, 2003; Lavy, 2002; Lavy, 2004). The value of operating with knowledge drawn from diverse locations is that the TAP system principles are relevant for all educators in all situations. Improved teaching knowledge (e.g. classroom management skills, pacing and planning skills) helps educators deliver information to students and helps those students retain it. Further, new teachers feel more supported and encouraged once inside the classroom.

6. Evidence-based

The TAP Teaching Standards emerged from extensive review of evidence on teacher standards and are consistently confirmed through ongoing research (e.g. Allday, 2011; Berry, Daughtrey, & Wieder, 2010; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Glen & Dotger, 2009; Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009; Rivet & Krajcik, 2008; Timperley & Parr, 2009). The value of relying on evidence-based practices to inform the TAP rubric is that these indicators of educator effectiveness are proven in the field across a broad range of students and school sites.

Upcoming Projects

Teacher and Administrator Attitude Survey

The annual TAP Teacher and Administrator Attitude Survey measures the impact of TAP on teacher attitudes and job satisfaction. The survey contains questions that assess the perceptions of the implementation of TAP at the school and teachers' and administrators' overall job satisfaction. NIET requested approximately 14,000 teachers and 1,000 administrators within TAP schools across 10 states (i.e. AR, AZ, CA, CO, IN, LA, MN, SC, TN, and TX) to complete the survey. The preceding results provide a glimpse into those responses aggregated across all respondents and comparing an early adoption year (2005) to the current year (2013). The next step in this analysis is to examine the changes across time and within each location, as well as examine additional questions reported throughout the survey, including the qualitative data and open-ended responses.

TAP and High School Implementation

Throughout the years of implementing the TAP system in elementary, middle, and high schools, NIET has learned a tremendous amount about how to implement an educator effectiveness model. NIET has also learned about the differences in implementing a program in different school configurations. As part of the commitment to recruiting, developing, supporting and retaining high-quality human capital in order to raise student achievement levels, NIET is developing a white paper on working specifically with high schools.

School Based Teacher Leadership Positions: Finding the Proper Balance

As school systems across the nation continue to stretch their resources to support their faculty and students, NIET is researching data across TAP sites on the tradeoff between cost efficiency and effective professional support in the number of teacher leaders roles created. Specifically, what is the optimal number of master and mentor teachers to support a given number of career teachers? All schools operate differently and have some unique aspects; however, based on our extensive work with schools, we are examining multiple years of data to help inform the conversation on balancing the number of master teachers, mentor teachers, and career teachers to ensure professional development is effective. NIET anticipates releasing this research in 2014.

Conclusion

The TAP system stands out because of its more than a decade-long track record of growth and success in raising student achievement in high-need schools. The research evidence also reveals several key reasons for TAP's positive impact: an evaluation system capable of differentiating teacher performance levels and providing detailed feedback for improvement, ongoing professional growth in classroom practice using student and teacher data to guide improvement, recruitment and retention of effective teachers, and the creation of a challenging, rewarding, and collegial environment focused on high-quality instruction and student learning.

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