

**NIET**

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR  
EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

# TAP Research Summary

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

DECEMBER 2017

# TAP Research Summary

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Researchers at NIET and elsewhere have studied the effectiveness of *TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement* 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 recent results that have emerged from the research on the TAP System to date. Data collection and analysis efforts are ongoing, and the findings described here will be updated periodically as information becomes available.

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## NIET Mission

Recognizing that an effective teacher is the most important school-based factor impacting student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Goldhaber, 2002; Hanushek, 2013; Headden, 2014; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Simon & Johnson, 2013; TNTP, 2012), NIET is committed to ensuring a highly skilled, strongly motivated, and competitively compensated teacher for every classroom in America. NIET supports states, districts, schools and universities in recruiting, developing, supporting, and retaining high-quality human capital in order to raise achievement levels for all students (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, 2015). NIET provides both on-site and online support across multiple aspects of educator effectiveness through educator evaluation, professional development and teacher leadership. This support is delivered both on-site and online through the comprehensive *TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement* (TAP) and customizable Educator Effectiveness Best Practices. As of the 2017- 18 school year, NIET initiatives are impacting over 250,000 educators and more than 2.5 million students.

### TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement Description

Introduced in 1999, “the TAP System has grown significantly as a comprehensive educator evaluation and support model for increasing educator effectiveness” (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, 2015, p. 4). The TAP System creates multiple career paths for teachers, provides ongoing applied professional development using a rigorous rubric of evaluation, and provides performance-based compensation to teachers and administrators. Each of these core elements is discussed below. For more information, visit [www.niet.org](http://www.niet.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 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 individualized professional development.
- 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.

## Educator Effectiveness Best Practices Center Description

The NIET Educator Effectiveness Best Practices Center provides innovative services, support, and solutions to schools, districts, and states to improve educator effectiveness. Based on two decades of experience in schools across the country, NIET works with its partners to redesign educator evaluation, deliver effective professional development, implement performance-based compensation systems, and train teacher leaders in schools. NIET offers a network of expert trainers and access to a range of innovative web-based resources and tools. For more information, visit [www.niet.org/best-practices-center](http://www.niet.org/best-practices-center).



## NIET Initiative Comparisons and Results

Since 1999, the TAP System of comprehensive educator effectiveness 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-need schools (over 90% of participating schools). In addition to schools and districts implementing the full TAP System, a number of states, districts, and schools are using TAP System core elements – in particular, the online portal which houses hundreds of hours of effective teaching across subjects and grade levels, the TAP teacher observational rubric, and the certification and recertification process for educator evaluators.

### TAP System Evaluation Methods Compared to Traditional Evaluation Methods

To improve the quality of classroom instruction, the quality of each teacher's instruction must be assessed. Traditional school systems have not been successful at measuring and assessing classroom instruction. TNTP (formerly The New Teacher Project) published a revealing report in 2009 showing that schools fail to evaluate their teachers in any meaningful way (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009). As TNTP reported, most teachers were rated at the very highest levels (replicated as Figure 1 below), despite the fact that most schools were not performing at these highest levels on achievement indicators.

A 2014 report from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ, 2014) indicated that while improvements in educator evaluation have occurred since the 2009 report, still many of the same problems persist. Given that differences in teacher effectiveness 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.

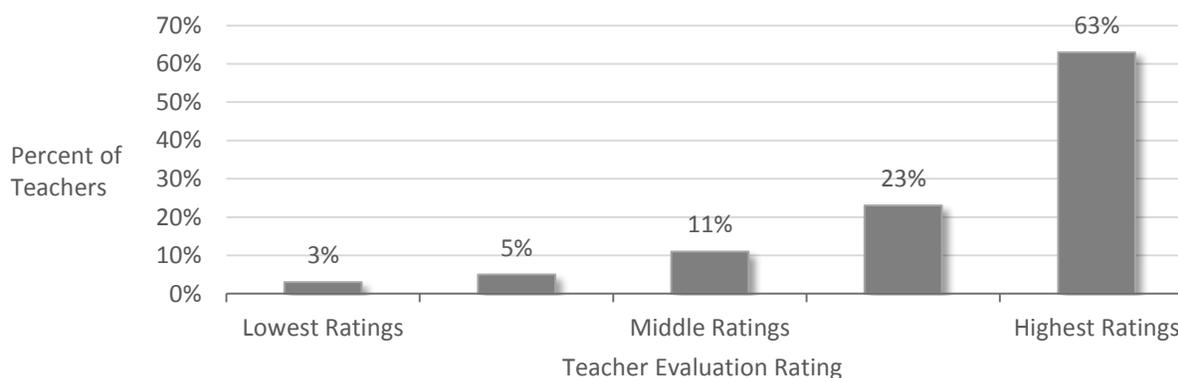
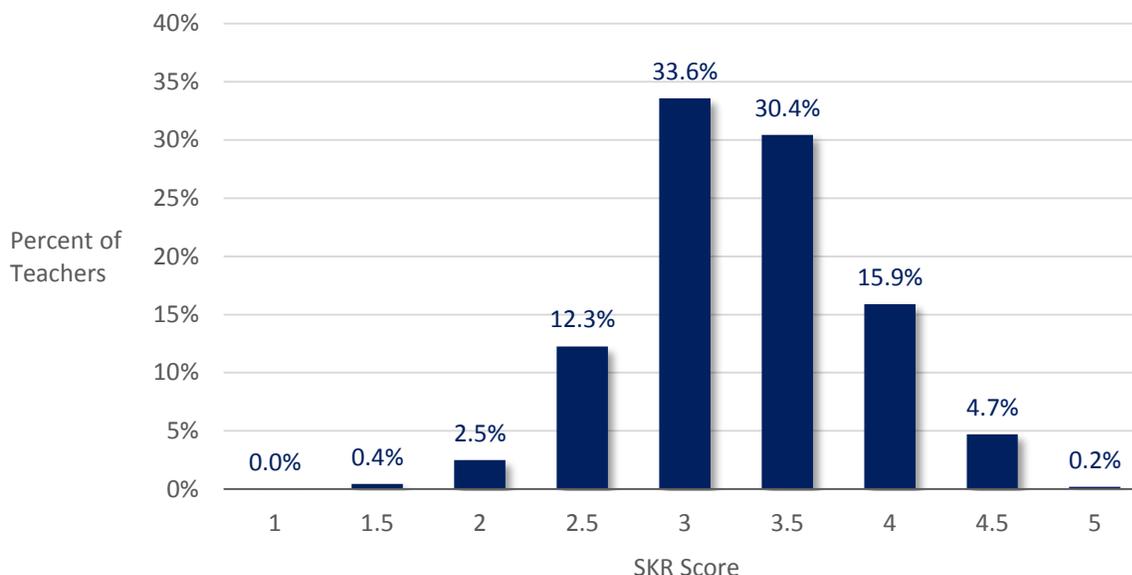


Figure 1. Traditional Teacher Evaluation Scores.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Teacher evaluation in five urban school districts, based on data taken from [https://tntp.org/assets/documents/TheWidgetEffect\\_2nd\\_ed.pdf](https://tntp.org/assets/documents/TheWidgetEffect_2nd_ed.pdf). Scores on a 3-point and 4-point scale 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 previously in Figure 1, the TAP System 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 often inflated ratings found in evaluation systems (see Figure 2).



Teacher Skills, Knowledge, and Responsibilities distribution of TAP evaluations using 1-5 scale in half-point increments. Figure based on 7,159 teachers and approximately 20,077 observations, 2016-17.

Figure 2. Observational Ratings of Teachers in TAP Schools Using TAP Teaching Standards Rubric.

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 1.0 to 5.0, 1 represents unsatisfactory performance on a certain standard, 3 represents proficiency on that standard, and 5 represents exemplary performance on that standard. Teachers earn scores in increments of 0.5.

### TAP Teachers Demonstrate Consistent Improvement across Time

TAP results show a steady improvement in observed skills during the course of the school year. Figure 3 shows recent improvement for teachers in TAP nationally. This shows the improvement in instructional quality scores over a two-year period. In the data shown, despite a slight dip over the summer, teachers demonstrated an overall path of improvement that continued over both years. This graph is based on a sample including all TAP schools during the years 2015-2017.

We tracked a cohort of 1,305 career teachers through observations grouped into six periods in fall, winter and spring of the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years. The cohort was composed of teachers working in TAP schools both years, with observations in each of the observation periods. Teachers present in only one school year or who lacked an observation in one of the quarters were excluded from the sample.

Including teachers present in only some of the periods would have complicated efforts to compare the level of instructional quality at different time points, since each average could reflect substantially different groups of teachers.

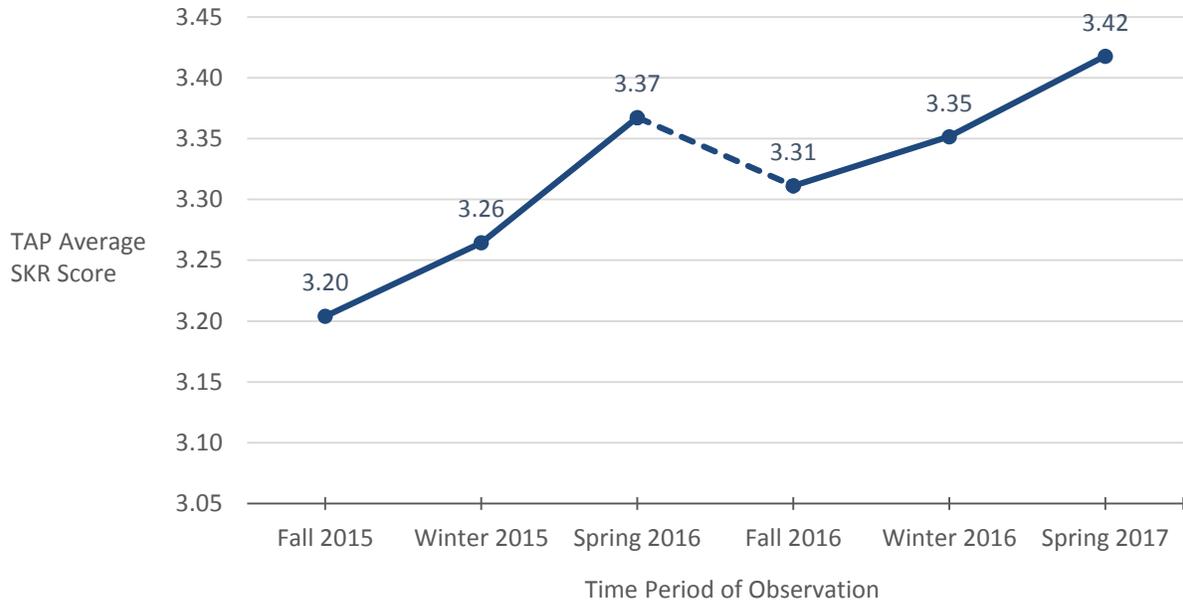


Figure 3. Teacher Instructional Improvement across Time.

Within the TAP System, improvements to teacher instructional practices translate into gains in student achievement. More importantly, these improvements increase over time.

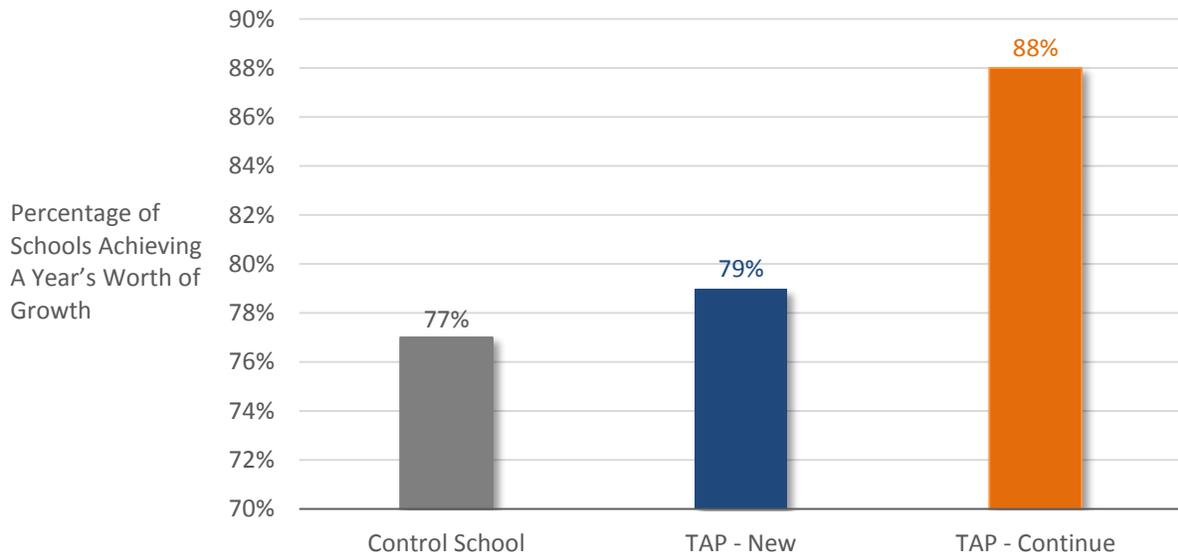


Figure 4. Student Achievement Growth by TAP System Status.



## TAP Impact in Schools and Districts

A notable success of the TAP System is the expanding preponderance of performance data that comes from examining the impact of the system across multiple locations and conducted by different researchers using varied methodological frameworks (Algiers Charter School Association, 2011; Barnett, Hudgens, & Logis, 2017; Barnett, Hudgens, Logis, & Alexander, 2016; Barnett, Hudgens, & Alexander, 2016; Barnett, Rinthapol, & Alexander, 2015; Barnett, Rinthapol, & Hudgens, 2014; Barnett, Wills, Hudgens, & Alexander, 2015; Buck & Coffelt, 2013; Daley & Kim, 2010; Hudson, 2010; Schacter & Thum, 2005; Schacter et al., 2002; Schacter, Thum, Reifsneider, & Schiff, 2004; Solmon, White, Cohen, & Woo, 2007). The next section discusses several of these studies demonstrating the impact of the TAP System. Following this review, three new studies, a project spotlight, and results from the 2017 TAP Attitude Survey are presented.

### Results from Prior Selected Studies of TAP's Impact

- In 2004, Schacter et al. examined the impact of the TAP System across 11 schools. This was a follow-up study of their 2002 study in which the authors conducted a statewide cluster analysis to analyze the growth in achievement of students and found that TAP schools made significantly higher improvements in student achievement gains. In the follow-up study, 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.
- 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 2010, Hudson examined the effect of the TAP System on student achievement across 151 schools in 10 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).
- Mann, Leutscher, and Reardon (2013) examined the impact of the TAP System across 15 schools in Louisiana. In order to determine impact, a one-to-one nearest-neighbor matching algorithm with replacements was created to find a comparison school for each TAP school. Based on the propensity

scores computed using the selection model, the algorithm chooses the non-TAP school with the propensity score closest to the propensity score of the TAP school. There was no significant difference between the TAP schools and their matched comparison schools in the pretreatment year,  $t(26) = 0.080, p > 0.05$ . However, results of the study indicate that in the four primary subjects assessed, there was a significant effect in favor of the TAP schools for ELA:  $F(1, 6421) = 6.334, p = 0.012$ ; Mathematics:  $F(1, 6421) = 86.386, p < 0.001$ ; Science:  $F(1, 7084) = 31.792, p < 0.001$ ; and Social Studies:  $F(1, 7085) = 87.411, p < 0.001$ . Further, the study examined the impact of the TAP System across time to find that the TAP schools significantly outperform comparison schools,  $F(1, 24) = 5.30, p < 0.05$ . The study also found that 92% of teachers reported that TAP made a positive difference on student achievement in their school and 91% reported that the AYP status was improved as a result of the TAP System.

- In their 2014 study, Barnett and Hudgens drew upon a sample of 12,095 teacher-level records, representing 413 schools in 10 states, to examine teacher retention rates in schools that implemented the TAP System during the 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13 school years. Counter to national trends, the authors found that TAP System schools retain 14% more teachers than similar high-need comparison schools and 10% more than the national average. Furthermore, the results indicate teachers retained in TAP schools become more effective over time as measured by observational and value-added scores.
- In 2014, Barnett, Wills, and Kirby evaluated the impact of the TAP System across 66 schools in Louisiana using two rigorous analytic strategies. First, the authors employed a linear regression to compare 2012-13 Assessment Index (AI) performance of the 66 TAP schools and non-TAP schools statewide, controlling for prior (2010-11) achievement, percentage of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch, school configuration, school size (number of students), and percentage of English language learners. Controlling for the covariates, implementation of the TAP System showed a significant positive effect on 2012-13 achievement: the 66 TAP schools scored 3.7 points higher on average than non-TAP schools ( $p < .01$ ). Second, the authors compared the 66 TAP schools with a propensity score matched group of non-TAP schools. The average 2012-13 AI for TAP schools (64.45) was 5.47 points greater than the average for the matched controls (58.98).
- Barnett and Wills (2016a) examined the impact of the TAP System on Black-White and Hispanic-White achievement gaps in Indiana schools. First, the authors compared achievement gaps in 32 TAP schools that began implementing TAP in school year 2010-11 with other Indiana schools. Study results indicate TAP schools have narrowed the Black-White gap in ELA and Hispanic-White gap in ELA and math more than other Indiana schools have. Second, the authors selected propensity score matched control schools separately for 1) the 20 TAP schools reporting data for Black and White students in 2009-10 and 2013-14, 2) the 24 TAP schools reporting data for Hispanic and White students in 2009-10 and 2013-14. Study results indicate TAP schools outperformed their matched schools; while achievement gaps at the TAP schools narrowed, most gaps at the matched schools widened.
- Barnett and Wills (2016b) investigated the stability over time of classroom observation scores from the TAP System rubric, as well as the relationships between TAP observational scores and value-added measures. The correlations between average SKR scores in the 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13 school years were highly significant and large, particularly for consecutive school years. Further, the examination of correlations between average SKR scores and classroom value-added scores in the 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13 school years revealed highly significant correlations. To put these findings into context, the authors examined the reported correlations across other observational measures used in large-scale research studies and discovered these correlations exceed or match the range reported in recent literature – evidence that the TAP observation rubric measures aspects of teacher practice that contribute to improved student test performance.



## Results from New Selected Studies of TAP’s Impact

### TAP System Perspectives: Teacher Perceptions of the TAP Systems across Time

Each year, NIET administers the TAP Teacher Attitude Survey in order to measure teacher perceptions and overall satisfaction with TAP. The goal of the current study was to longitudinally explore teachers’ perceptions by drawing from the TAP Attitude Survey data of 4,044 teachers, representing 194 schools in nine states, who worked in TAP schools in both the 2014-15 and the 2015-16 school years. Respondents consisted of teachers in various roles (83% career teachers, 12% mentor teachers, and 5% master teachers). In 2014-15, years of teaching experience ranged from less than a full year to 54 years.

Results indicate that support for the TAP System is high and growing among teachers. Figure 5 demonstrates teachers’ strong level of support for the four core elements of TAP<sup>2</sup>, and further shows the sustained high level of support over time. Teachers consistently expressed the strongest support for the instructionally focused accountability component. In both 2014-15 and 2015-16, 92% and 93% of teachers, respectively, reported that that they moderately or strongly supported this multi-measure system of teacher evaluation. As one teacher wrote:

*“TAP has allowed me to reflect more on my teaching practices and student learning. I feel I have grown more this year than in my previous years of teaching. The rubric helps set great expectations for teachers, which leads to greater teacher and student success and motivation in the classroom.”*

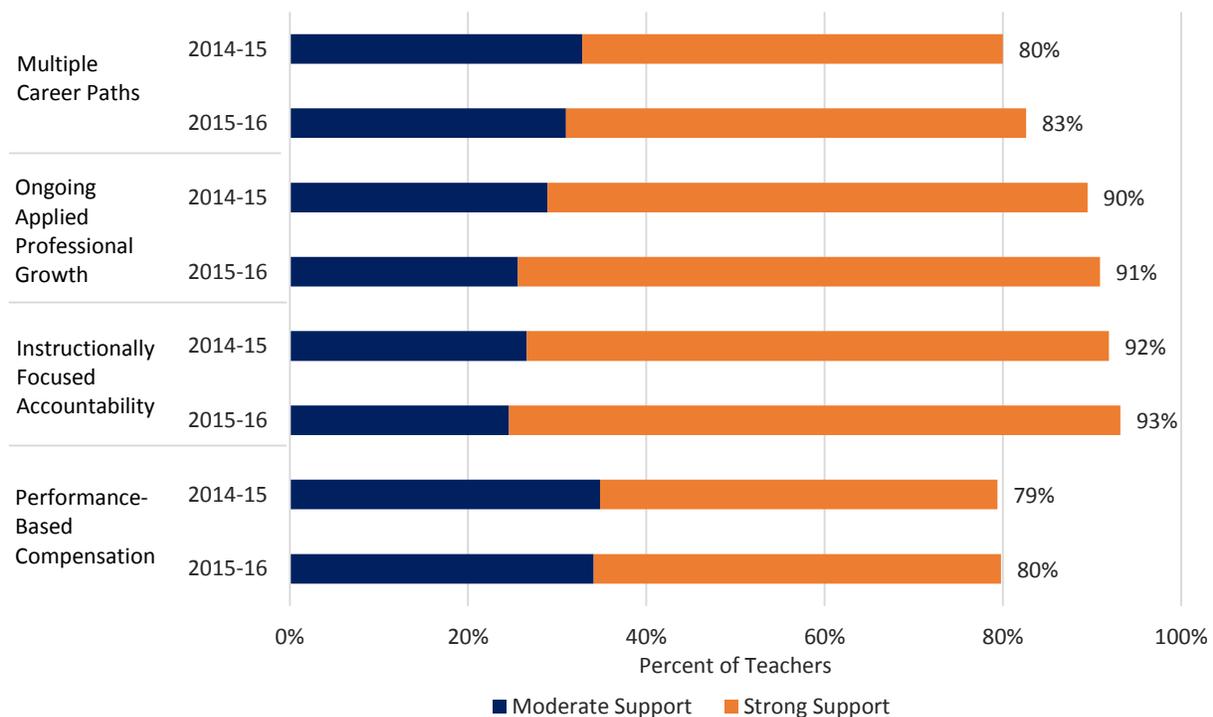


Figure 5. Levels of Teacher Reported Support for TAP System Core Elements over Time.

<sup>2</sup> The four dimensions represented in this figure are constructed from multiple teacher survey items using factor analysis. Survey items are based on a 5-point Likert scale indicating agreement (1 = Not at all and 5 = Very Much). For reporting purposes on the four TAP elements and collegiality, 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).

In addition to reporting support for the core elements of the TAP System, teachers report that implementation of the TAP System has impacted their practices. Teacher agreement with the statement that they participate more actively in professional development to improve their performance as a result of TAP significantly increased from 2014-15 ( $M = 3.46, SD = 1.20$ ) to 2015-16 ( $M = 3.54, SD = 1.19$ ),  $t(3,984) = 4.52, p < .01$ . Further, teachers agree that they work harder to improve their performance as a result of TAP, and agreement with this statement significantly increased from 2014-15 ( $M = 3.43, SD = 1.23$ ) to 2015-16 ( $M = 3.53, SD = 1.22$ ),  $t(3,995) = 5.53, p < .01$ . The locally created and applied professional development activities provided by TAP were credited as integral reasons for these changes. As noted by one teacher:

*“To me, the best part of TAP is cluster. It gives me an opportunity to work on areas that will help my specific students for the year.”*

Moreover, educators detailed student achievement growth as a result of TAP. Teacher agreement with the statement that the TAP professional growth activities lead to higher student achievement significantly increased from 2014-15 ( $M = 3.72, SD = 1.00$ ) to 2015-16 ( $M = 3.80, SD = 0.99$ ),  $t(4,029) = 5.35, p < .01$ . Further, teacher agreement with the statement that the TAP teacher evaluation system leads to higher student achievement significantly increased from 2014-15 ( $M = 3.67, SD = 1.06$ ) to 2015-16 ( $M = 3.73, SD = 1.04$ ),  $t(3,996) = 3.45, p < .01$ .

Figure 6 presents the above results in a different way, showing the percent of teachers each year who agreed with these statements. This figure shows that the majority of teachers agreed with statements about the TAP System’s impact on teacher practices and student achievement, and the percent of teachers agreeing with these statements has increased over time.

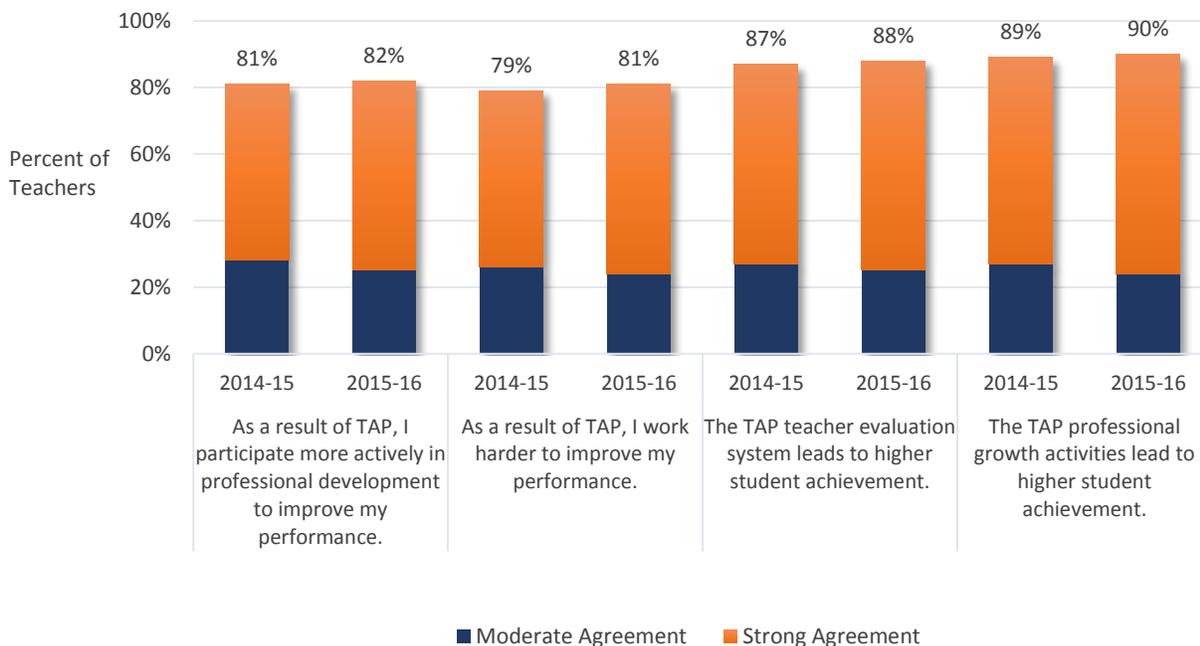


Figure 6. Teachers’ Perceptions of TAP System Impact on Teacher Practices and Student Achievement.

## Impact of the TAP System on Student Achievement in Louisiana

Building on the 2014 study conducted by Barnett, Wills, and Kirby (Barnett, Wills, & Kirby, 2014), the current study examined the impact of the TAP System in 49 K-8 schools in Louisiana. These schools began implementing the TAP System between the 2010-11 and 2012-13 school years, with average free/reduced price lunch eligibility of 87.6% at the start of TAP implementation. Thirty-nine (80%) of these schools implemented TAP with the support of a Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF-3) grant, while the remaining of the schools received funding from other sources to implement the TAP System.

The goal of this study was to examine the academic performance of students in Louisiana TAP schools with strong implementation fidelity of the TAP System, relative to students in matched comparison schools. School performance data was drawn from the Louisiana Department of Education website. School academic performance was measured using the K-8 Assessment Index (AI) score for the 2009-10 to 2015-16 school years. In 2012-13, the maximum score for the K-8 AI score changed from 200 to 150; therefore, we transformed the K-8 AI scores into standardized scores in order to make comparisons across different school years. The quality of implementation in each TAP school was measured by school review scores.

Propensity score matching was used to select matched comparison schools. First, a propensity score for each school was computed, which involved estimating the conditional probability of a school to receive TAP given its base year student achievement and the percent of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL). Then, a one-to-one, nearest-neighbor matching method without replacement was employed to choose one non-TAP with the closest propensity score to that of the TAP school and with an exact match on school type (e.g., elementary/middle school, combination school, high school).

As shown in Figure 7, the 49 Louisiana TAP schools significantly outperformed their matched comparison schools in student performance growth ( $t(48) = 2.11, p = 0.04$ ) from base year to 2015-16. While, on average, Louisiana TAP schools improved by 0.21 SD in student performance from one year prior to TAP System implementation to 2015-16, student performance in matched schools declined 0.03 over this time.

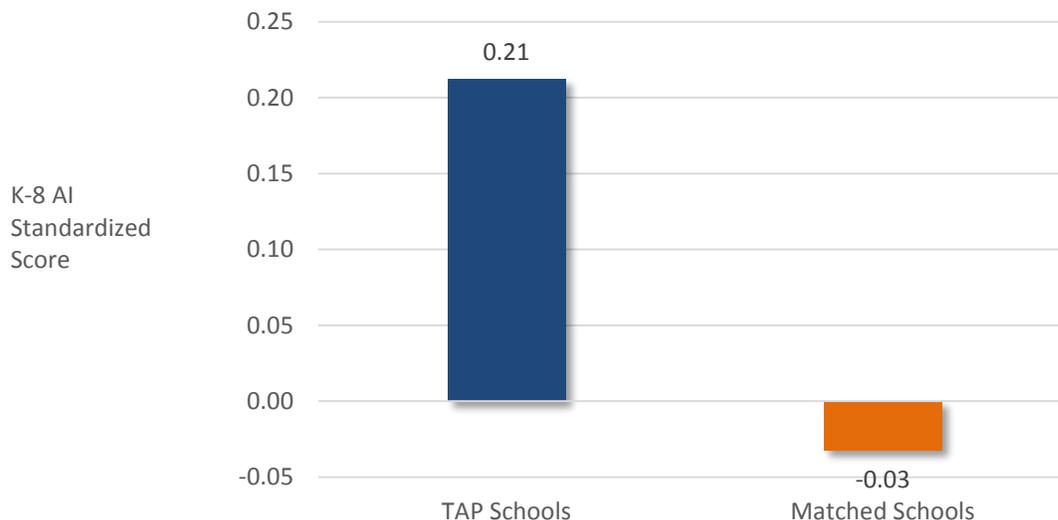


Figure 7. Student Performance Growth in Louisiana TAP and Matched Comparison Schools.

## Impact of the TAP System on Student Achievement in Slaton ISD

In 2014, Slaton Independent School District (ISD) began implementing the TAP System districtwide with the support of a U.S. Department of Education Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED-1) grant, in partnership with Texas Tech University (TTU) and NIET. In addition to the implementation of the TAP System, the three-way partnership among NIET, TTU and Slaton ISD included providing all teachers at Slaton Junior High with coursework in STEM, Literacy, and Leadership delivered by TTU faculty. Coursework in these areas was designed to closely align with the expectations within the TAP System.

To examine the impact of the TAP System implementation and the advanced coursework offered in Slaton Junior High, school performance data from the year prior to TAP System implementation through the 2016-17 school year were tracked. School performance, obtained from the Texas Education Agency website, was assessed based on the percentage of students at “Approaches Grade Level or Above” (previously labeled “Level II Satisfactory Standard or Above”) for all grades in 1) all subjects, 2) reading, and 3) mathematics, as reported in the 2013-14 through the 2016-17 Texas Academic Performance Reports. Findings are shown in Figure 8 and explained in more detail below.

**All Subjects.** From 2013-14 to 2016-17, the percentage of students at “Approaches Grade Level or Above” in all subjects combined declined by 2% statewide. During this same time, Slaton Junior High experienced increases in the percentage of students at “Approaches Grade Level or Above” in all subjects combined - 10% growth across all students and 9% growth among economically disadvantaged students.

**Reading.** A decline in the percentage of students at “Approaches Grade Level or Above” in reading occurred statewide from 2013-14 to 2016-17. On the other hand, Slaton Junior High saw increases in the percentage of students at “Approaches Grade Level or Above” in reading for all students and economically disadvantaged students independently.

**Mathematics.** Texas and Slaton Junior High experienced increases in the percentage of students at “Approaches Grade Level or Above” in math from 2013-14 to 2016-17. However, while the percentage of students at “Approaches Grade Level or Above” in math increased by 1% statewide, it increased by 11% for students overall and by 10% for economically disadvantaged students at Slaton Junior High.

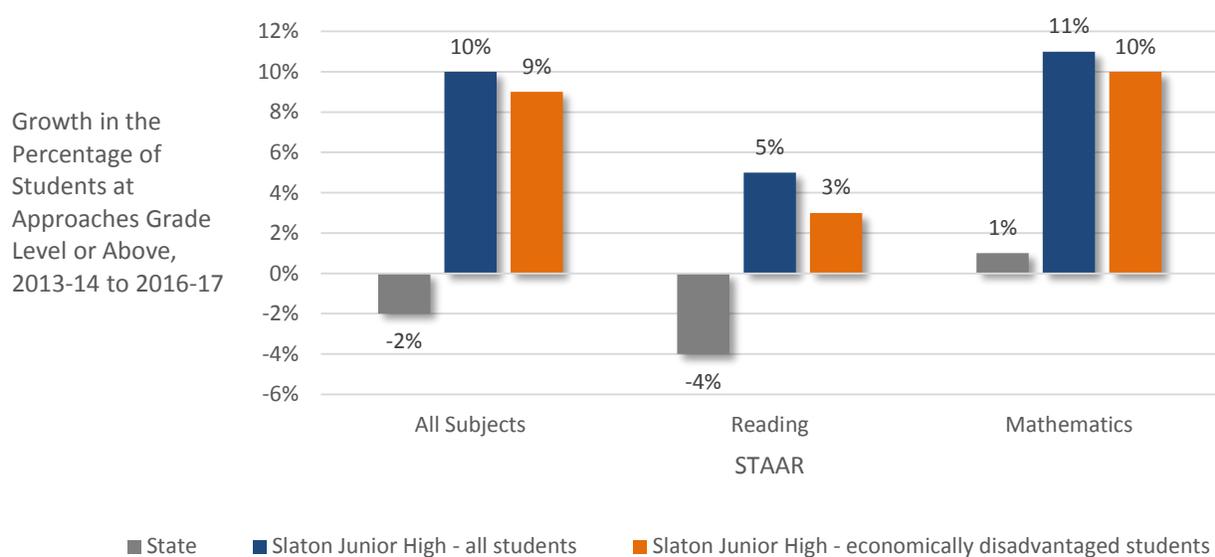


Figure 8. Student Performance Growth Statewide and at Slaton Junior High.



## Project Spotlight: Impact of the Leadership Instruction for Teachers (LIFT) Program

The quality of teachers and the quality of principals are the top two school variables impacting student achievement (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Hallinger, 2011; McKibben, 2013; Papa, 2007; Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). High-poverty, low-achieving school districts, which arguably need the best principals, experience the most difficulty attracting high-quality applicants (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012). New principals working in high-need schools also often lack skills needed to turn around historically low student achievement, including skills for coaching teachers to improve instruction or using data to target areas for improvement.

With support from a Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED-2) grant, NIET, TTU and nine high-need school districts across Texas and Louisiana address this need through the *Leadership Instruction for Teachers (LIFT)* program. This three-way partnership aims to improve a principal preparation program through a competency-based fellowship that offers future school leaders hands-on experiences of school leadership in collaboration with highly skilled veteran leaders, and university preparation.

TTU and NIET collaborate with partner district leaders to identify potential candidates from a pool of mentor/master teachers based on a track-record of exemplary achievement. Potential candidates are screened through a rigorous selection process that includes application materials, the Haberman Assessment, and a group interview with representatives from TTU, NIET and partner districts. Those admitted into the program (called Principal Fellows) are placed in a different school within the district they came from to serve as an interim assistant principal during the yearlong, job-embedded clinical experience while also taking courses from TTU. While serving as an interim assistant principal, each Principal Fellow is mentored by a high-quality principal mentor and a TTU coach. TTU coaches provide weekly support to each Principal Fellow and conduct monthly site visits that support both the Principal Fellows and the principal mentors. TTU coaches also help Principal Fellows connect to partner district central office resources and specialists to help the target school achieve its school improvement goals.

Evaluation of the impact of this partnership has revealed successes in the following five areas:

### 1. Recruitment of High-Quality Principal Candidates.

Out of 50 applicants for the 2016-17 and the 2017-18 cohorts, 27 (54%) gained admission. As shown in the figure below, admitted candidates significantly outperformed non-admitted candidates on their average application material score ( $M = 20.28$ ,  $SD = 3.09$  for admitted candidates,  $M = 15.84$ ,  $SD = 3.40$  for non-admitted candidates;  $t(48) = 4.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and on their average interview score ( $M = 8.56$ ,  $SD = 1.66$  for admitted candidates,  $M = 7.02$  and  $SD = 1.80$  for non-admitted candidates;  $t(35) = 2.45$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Admitted and non-admitted candidates were not significantly different in their Haberman Assessment score ( $t(35) = 1.32$ ,  $n.s.$ ), but admitted candidates obtained a “High” score on more dimensions than non-admitted candidates ( $t(35) = 2.25$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

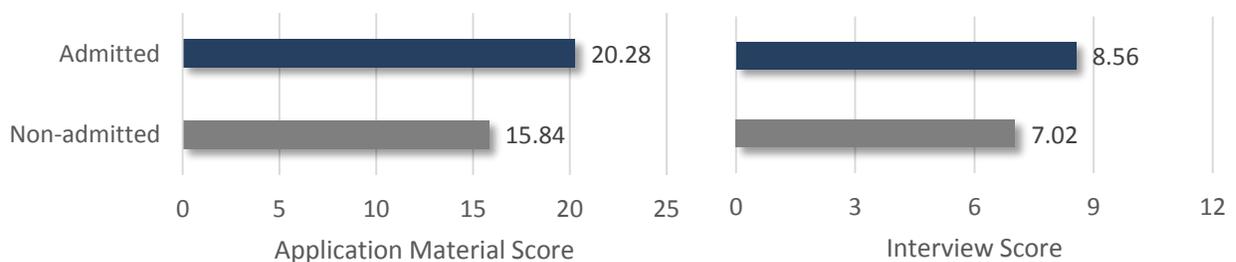


Figure 9. Application Material and Interview Scores for Candidates in LIFT Program, by Admission Status.

## 2. Growth in Principal Fellows' Leadership Skills

Principal mentors evaluated Principal Fellows' leadership skills using the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS). As shown in Figure 10, on average, Principal Fellows showed improvement in each T-PESS standard from midyear to end-of-year evaluations. Moreover, changes in three T-PESS standards were statistically significant: Instructional Leadership ( $t(10) = 2.78, p < .01$ ), Executive Leadership ( $t(10) = 2.43, p < .05$ ), and Strategic Operations ( $t(10) = 2.22, p < .05$ ).

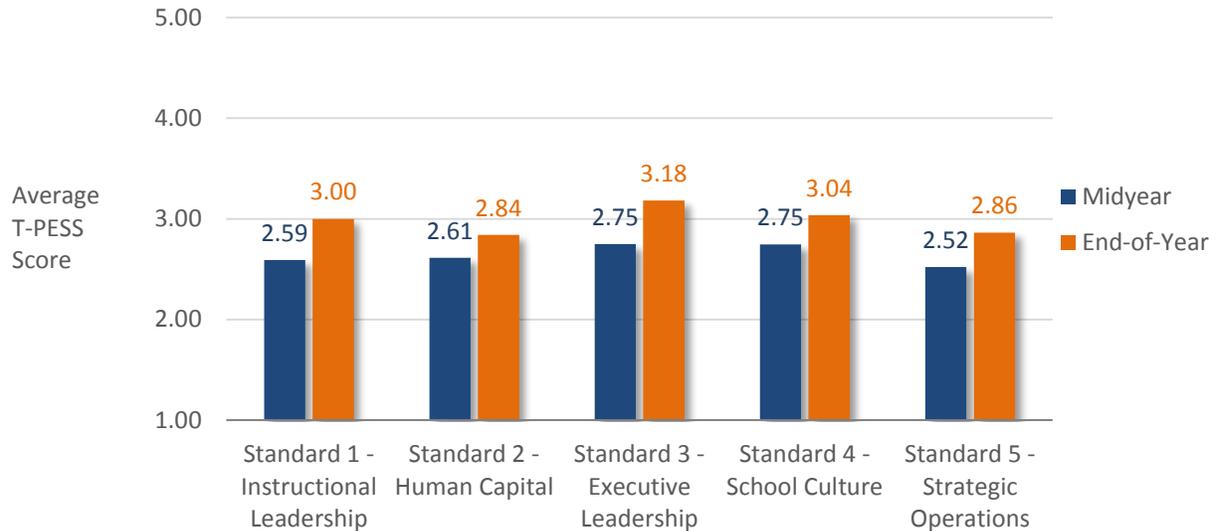


Figure 10. T-PESS Scores among Principal Fellows, 2016-17 Cohort.

## 3. Improvement in Coaching Skills

TTU faculty and staff assessed Principal Fellows' coaching skills by evaluating their ability to facilitate discussions before and after the observations of teachers (i.e., pre- and post-conferences). Figure 11 shows that on average, Principal Fellows demonstrated improvement in their coaching skills at pre- and post-conferences. Moreover, dependent sample  $t$  tests suggest that Principal Fellows' improvement in coaching skills from Cycle 1 to Cycle 4 were statistically significant ( $t(10) = 4.91, p < .001$  for pre-conference and  $t(10) = 4.66, p < .001$  for post-conference).

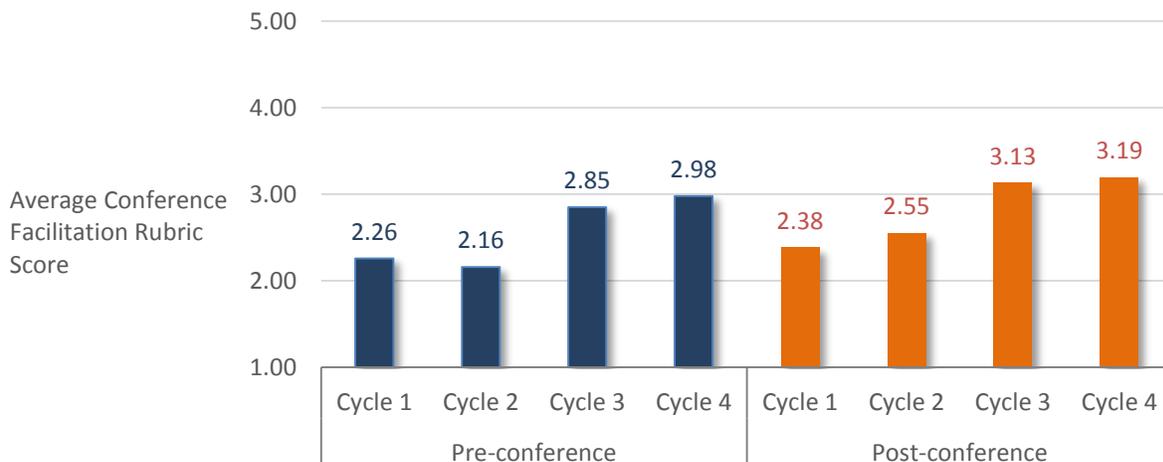


Figure 11. Principal Fellows' Coaching Skills, 2016-17 Cohort.

#### 4. Positive Perceptions of the LIFT Program

To gauge Principal Fellows’ perceptions of the *LIFT* program, an online survey was administered toward the end of their yearlong experience as an interim assistant principal. As shown in Figure 12, when asked about their overall *LIFT* program experience, 92% reported their experience as “Good” or “Excellent.” Similarly, when asked whether they feel “job-ready,” 100% voted “Yes” or “Yes, very much.”

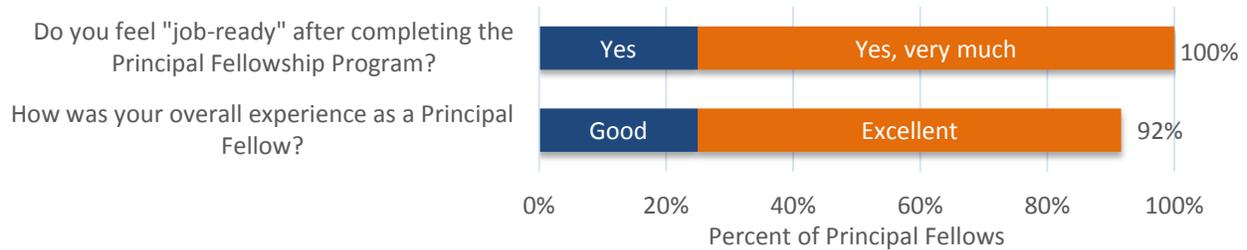


Figure 12. Principal Fellows’ Perception of the *LIFT* Program, 2016-17 cohort.

#### 5. Placement of Principal Fellows in High-Need Schools upon Graduation

Thirteen Principal Fellows from the 2016-17 cohort graduated in August 2017 and 12 (92%) are serving in high-need schools.



## National TAP Attitude Survey – 2017

### Teacher Results – 2017 TAP Attitude Survey

In spring 2017, 4,714 teachers (73% response rate) from 160 schools in 9 states completed the TAP Teacher Attitude Survey. Below, we present teacher reported levels of support for the four core elements of the TAP System and collegiality.

**Collegiality.** Critics of performance measures and incentives for teachers often indicate such policies 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 2017 TAP national survey of teacher attitudes, 94% of teachers in TAP schools agree with statements reporting a high level of collegiality in their schools, and over 73% report strong agreement. As one teacher shared:

*“[TAP] has brought about major changes in the collaboration among teachers. Before TAP, teachers rarely talked to each other about what was going on in their classrooms, but now it happens frequently.”*

This evidence for collegiality has been remarkably high over the last decade, as shown in Figure 13, which indicates that TAP System schools consistently have a collaborative and collegial environment.

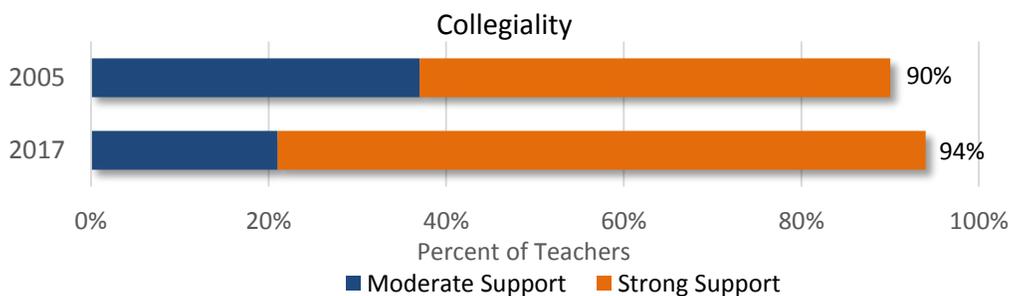


Figure 13. Level of Reported Support for Collegiality from Teachers Nationwide.

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 14-17.

**Multiple career paths.** 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 all teachers 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. As one teacher noted:

*“TAP has provided great opportunities to learn from master and mentor teachers who have extensive knowledge.”*

Figure 14 showcases the strong levels of support teachers have for the opportunity to take on additional roles and responsibilities provided by the TAP System.

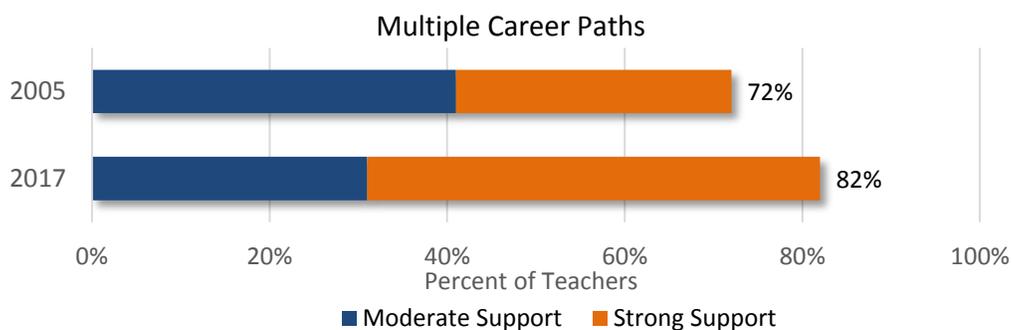


Figure 14. Level of Reported Support for Multiple Career Paths from Teachers Nationwide.

**Ongoing applied professional growth.** 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. As one teacher stated:

*“TAP has made teachers more effective by creating opportunities to analyze student data and work to drive instruction. A large part of this takes place during clusters, where teachers can collaborate and support each other more effectively.”*

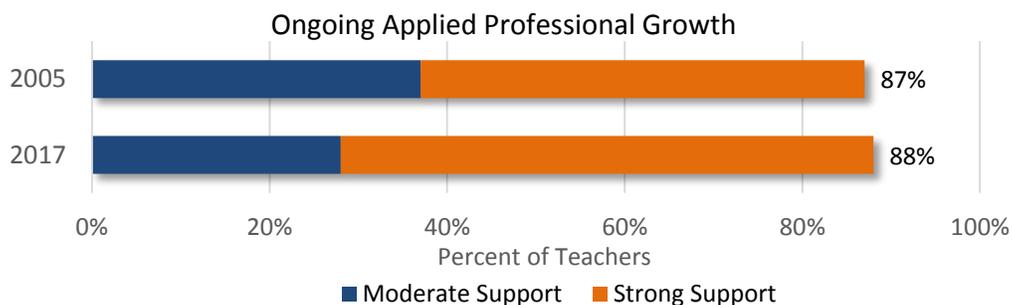


Figure 15. Level of Reported Support for Ongoing Applied Professional Growth from Teachers Nationwide.

**Instructionally focused accountability.** 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. As one teacher wrote:

*“TAP has created stronger instruction among our staff. Using the TAP rubric has helped us better understand effective instructional practices and has given teachers a common language to communicate expectations and to improve.”*

Figure 16 illustrates the strong level of support reported by TAP teachers across the nation.

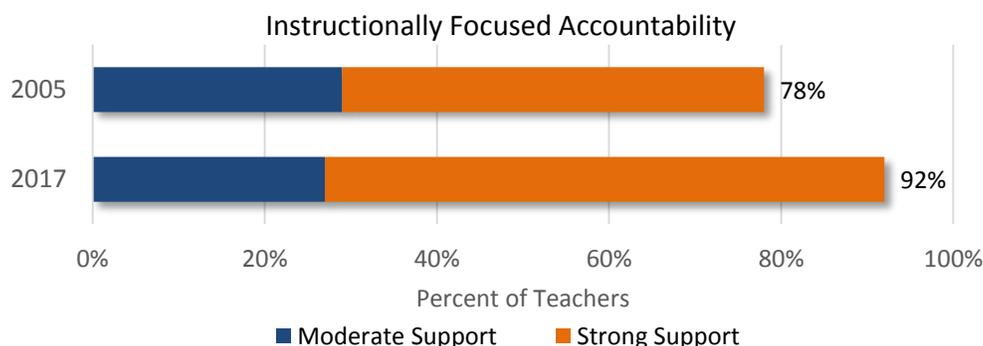


Figure 16. Level of Reported Support for Instructionally Focused Accountability from Teachers Nationwide.

**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. As one teacher reported:

*“Our teachers do enjoy and look forward to the compensation aspect of TAP. It is nice to receive an extra reward for our teaching efforts.”*

Figure 17 demonstrates the level of support for the performance-based compensation system from TAP teachers. Levels of support for performance-based compensation in TAP schools have increased significantly over time, from 49% in 2005 to 75% in 2017.

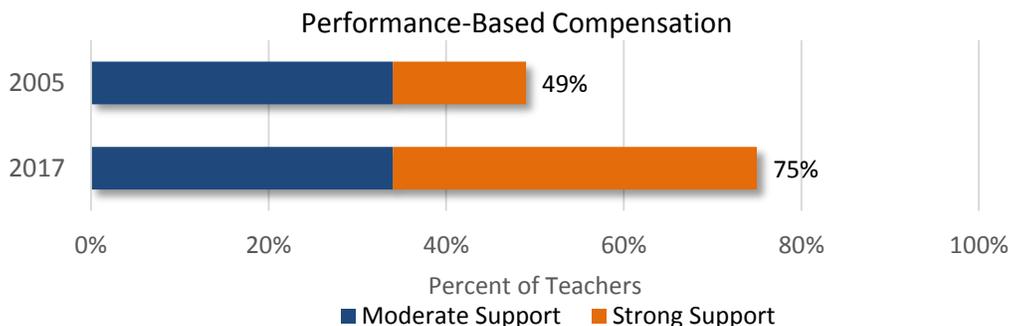


Figure 17. Level of Reported Support for Performance-Based Compensation from Teachers Nationwide.

## Administrator Results – 2017 TAP Attitude Survey

The above substantially positive results from the TAP Teacher Attitudes Survey are echoed by the 2017 TAP Administrator Attitudes Survey (n = 219 administrators). When asked about the impact TAP has had on their school, one principal wrote:

*“In seven years, our school has moved from being a ‘D’ school to being on the verge of an ‘A’ school. Performance on standardized tests including the ACT and End-of-Course tests has increased dramatically. The graduation rate has increased from 66% to 96%. TAP is the foundation of our instructional program and has been a key factor in our success.”*

As shown in Figure 18, principals overwhelmingly report that TAP has a positive effect on instructional practices, collegiality, student achievement, and teacher effectiveness.

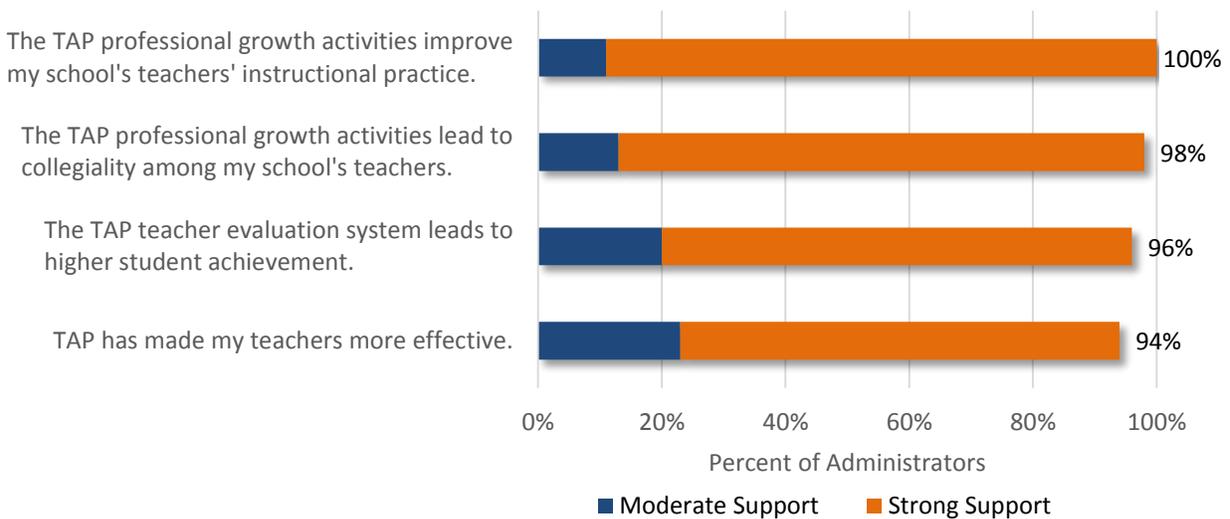


Figure 18. Administrator Survey Results on TAP Outcomes in their Schools.

Further, as noted in Figure 19, a significant majority of principals (90%) agree that TAP helps retain effective teachers.

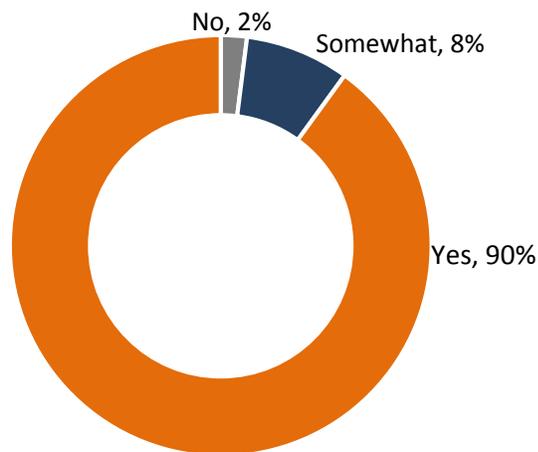


Figure 19. “The implementation of TAP has helped retain effective teachers at my school.”



## Upcoming Projects

### [Voices in the Field: National Study of Educator Views of Teacher Leadership](#)

Throughout the years of implementing the TAP System across multiple states in hundreds of schools, NIET has learned a tremendous amount about the use of teacher leaders in schools. To add to this knowledge, NIET has conducted a series of interviews and focus groups with educators across several states nationwide to explore views of teacher leadership. This report will inform conversations about defining teacher leadership roles, the preparation of and support for teacher leaders in schools, as well as successes and challenges to using teacher leaders as a strategy to improve teaching and learning.

### [Impact of an Educator Effectiveness System on Retaining Administrators Nationwide](#)

In 2014, Barnett and Hudgens released a report examining teacher retention rates in schools that implemented the TAP System. Recognizing the role administrators play in the successful implementation of any reform effort, in a follow-up piece, the authors use school rosters, administrator effectiveness data, and school data to investigate the retention and impact of administrators who work in TAP System schools. Specifically, the authors examine retention rates for multiple school years across three types of administrator groups, those who: 1) worked continuously at the same TAP school (“TAP school stayers”); 2) transferred from one TAP school to another TAP school (“TAP school movers”); and 3) left TAP schools altogether (“TAP school leavers”). Additionally, the authors analyze characteristics of these three categories of administrators.

## Conclusion

The TAP System stands out because of its track record spanning two decades 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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