

Louisiana



Schools

Over 60 schools from across eight LEAs are participating in the TIF grant and implementing the TAP System to improve teacher practices and student achievement.

The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching partnered with the Louisiana Department of Education to implement the TAP System in schools across the state through a Teacher Incentive Fund grant. Participating schools were staggered during the implementation, which culminates in over 60 schools across the state participating. Participating schools are from Ascension, DeSoto, East Feliciana, Jefferson, Pointe Coupee, St. Mary, Tangipahoa, and West Baton Rouge Parishes.

Key Evaluation Findings

Focus Groups

From focus group conversations with teachers and administrators, the impression of the TAP System across the schools was more fully understood. Even though this was year three of implementing the system, two principals commented on the deeper understanding of effective teaching they witnessed. As one principal noted, *“We saw the growth of TAP from something we did in clusters in Year 1 to what we do all day every day.”* The other principal added, *“The difference between Years 1 and 2 is phenomenal. Conceptualization occurs. Everything is linked to thinking and problem solving.”* Pressed to explain what she meant by “conceptualization occurs,” she explained, *“You don’t need to spend 12 weeks on the rubric. You realize that everything is inter-connected, not 19 separate indicators in isolation. Teachers who realize this and teach kids that things are inter-connected are the best teachers.”*

One district leader also reported greater collaboration in the high schools due to TAP. Previously, he said, *“Each teacher in the high school was on their own little island. TAP was a huge shift for them.”* Another notable statement is from a 29-year veteran high school teacher, who reported feeling that this was her first real year of ‘real’ teaching, her first year in TAP. Previously, she explained, *“I felt that I was on my own, but now I see collaboration and support in my classroom and across the school.”*

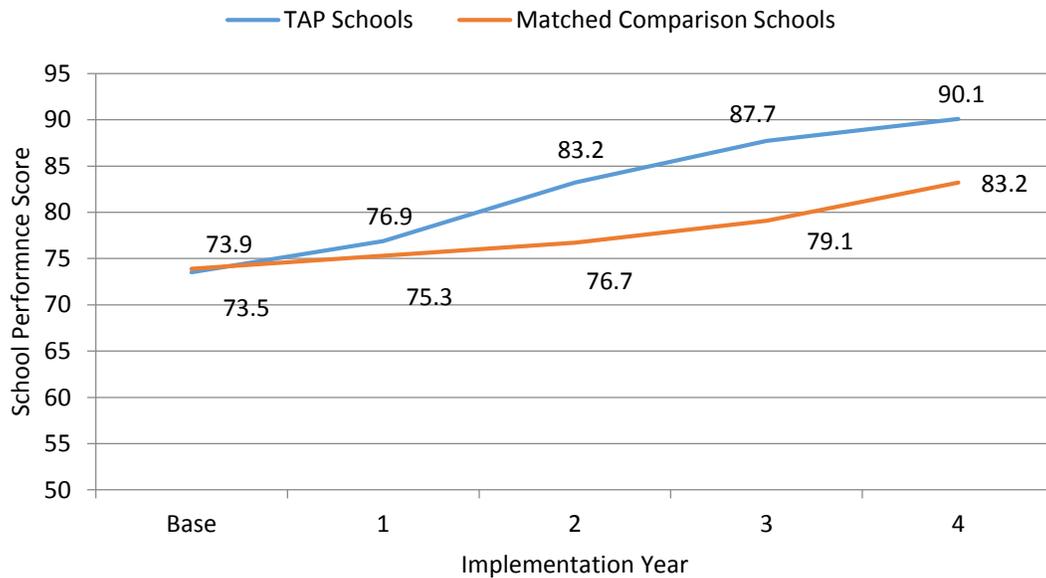
Achievement

A study released in fall 2013 evaluated the impact of the TAP System across 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.

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 1 demonstrates the improvements of the TAP schools over their matched schools in year-to-year comparisons.

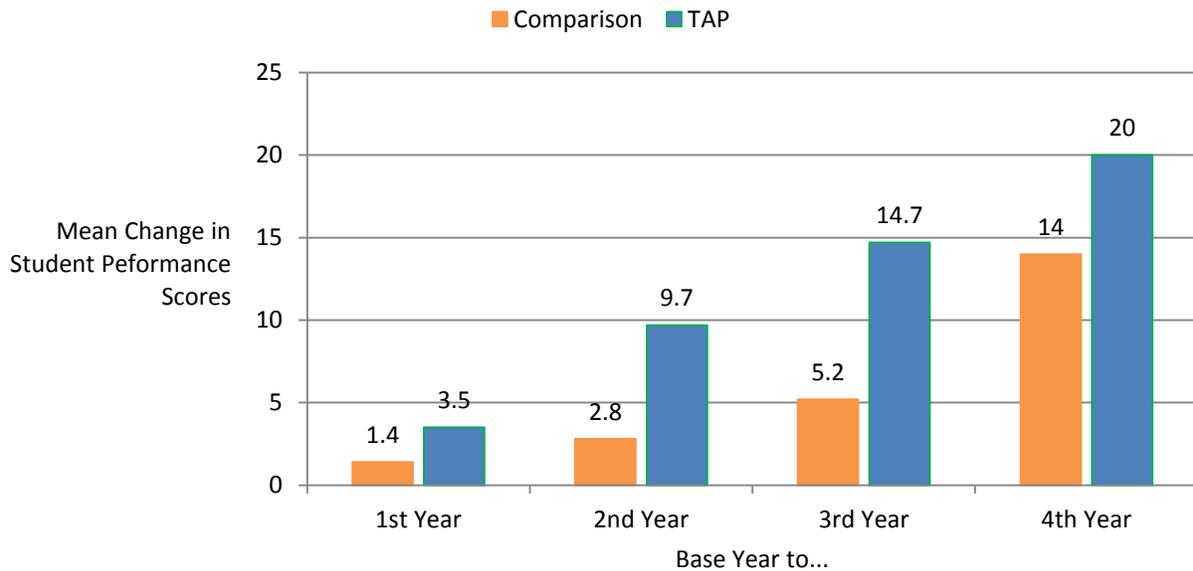
Figure 1: Interactive, Inc., Study Finds Louisiana TAP Schools Outperform Matched Schools



The researchers also examined the growth on the School Performance Score (SPS)¹ 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 2 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 2, 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.

¹ 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 2: 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: $F(1, 7085) = 87.41, p = 0.00$].

These data demonstrate 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., in which 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 percent of teachers reported using feedback from their evaluations in their classroom instruction as well as using the TAP standards. More than 50 percent when asked on any given day responded that they were currently receiving individual classroom coaching.

Figure 3: Interactive, Inc., Study Finds Louisiana TAP Teachers Improve Instructional Practices

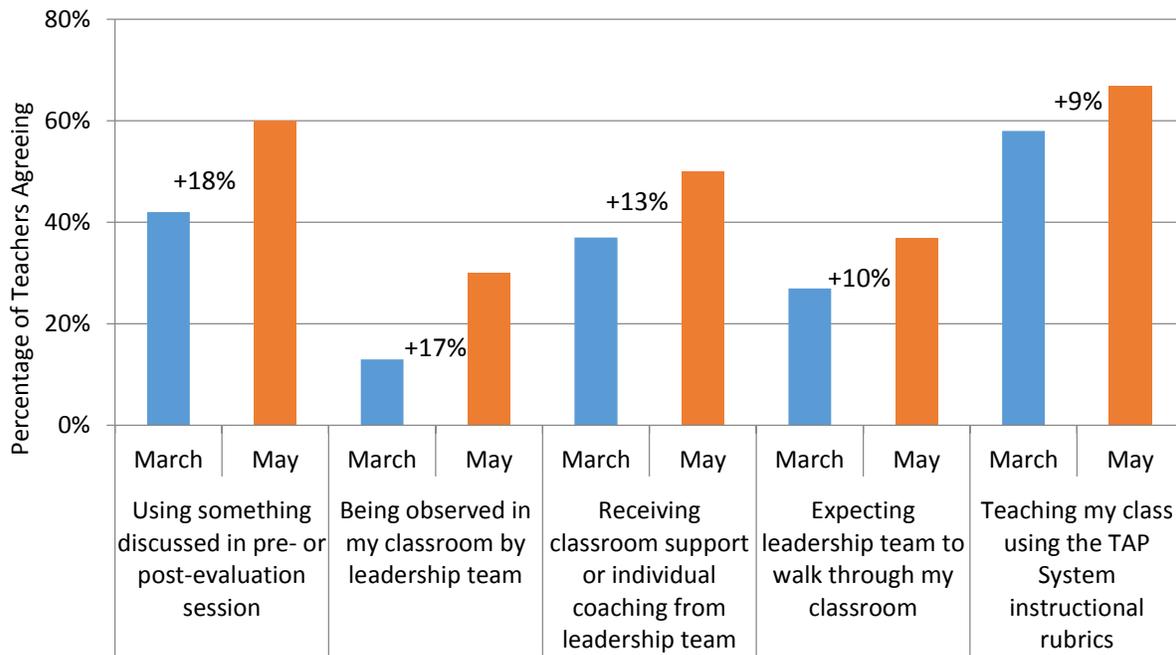


Figure 3 further demonstrates this improvement teachers reported in their behaviors based on real-time work samples collected in March and again in May. Across the three month data collection window, the teachers show a near 50 percent increase in the percentage using something from a pre-post conference 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.

Beyond these remarkable findings, the Louisiana Department of Education also released a report showing the effects of the TAP System.

In September 2013, the Louisiana Department of Education released a list of schools that showed significant gains while also using rigorous classroom observation criteria. Sixty-three of the state’s approximately 1,400 Louisiana schools were designated “high-achieving schools,” in the top 10 percent of achievement gains and observation rigor. Of those 63 schools, 21 (33%) used the TAP rubric.