

Minnesota



Schools

Hmong College Prep Academy

Partnership Academy

Sojourner Truth Academy

Stonebridge Community School

The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching partnered with a consortium of independent Minnesota charter schools. Located in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, Sojourner Truth Academy, Hmong College Prep Academy, Partnership Academy, and Stonebridge Community School began implementing TAP during the 2012–2013 school year.

As part of Minnesota’s Quality Compensation for Teachers (Q-Comp) program, aspects of TAP were previously implemented in some Minnesota schools, and NIET’s Best Practices Center worked closely to support Q-Comp activities. Receipt of this TIF grant brought the opportunity of full TAP implementation for this consortium of four charter schools.

Because they were implementing aspects of TAP previously, Sojourner Truth Academy, Hmong College Prep Academy and Partnership Academy fully implemented TAP’s comprehensive model during the 2012–2013 year. Stonebridge Community School, which joined in May 2012, used the remainder of the year as a planning year. The Year 1 evaluation drew from progress reports, focus groups with teachers and administrators, teacher and administrator responses to the TAP Attitude Survey, teacher retention, and examination of student achievement and teacher and principal effectiveness.

The Schools

Hmong College Prep Academy

Hmong College Prep Academy is a K–12 public charter school located in St. Paul, Minnesota. This school has 909 students enrolled, 88 percent of whom are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Partnership Academy

Partnership Academy, located in Richfield, is a public charter school serving students in grades K–5. This school has 282 students enrolled, 98 percent of whom are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Sojourner Truth Academy

Sojourner Truth Academy is a K–8 public charter elementary school located in North Minneapolis. This school has 393 students enrolled, 93 percent of whom are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Stonebridge Community School

Stonebridge Community School is a charter school serving students in grades K–6 located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The school has 247 students, 96 percent of whom are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Key Evaluation Findings

Preparations made during the 2012–13 Year

- A hiring plan was created with each charter school.
- Principals, assistant principals, master and mentor teachers completed TAP CORE training.
- Districts were granted access to NIET’s data management system, CODE.
- Representatives from three schools attended the National TAP Conference, including a Pre-Conference specifically designed for the charter schools surrounding the development of effective cluster meetings and ensuring fidelity to the evaluation process.
- Representatives from all four schools attended one of the National TAP Summer Institutes.

Focus Groups

Teachers expressed feeling more cohesive and uniform as a faculty and more collegial working for their students. Principals reported similar changes in their staff, and commented on the relationships among career, mentor and master teachers.

“Our students see us working as a team, and they see how it affects them; they see the whole building working to help them.” -MN Career Teacher

TAP Attitude Surveys

Teachers from Hmong College Prep Academy, Partnership Academy and Sojourner Truth Academy overwhelmingly supported the elements of the TAP System. Minnesota support levels were similar, but slightly above reports from TAP teachers nationwide (Figure 1). Of particular attention is the high level of collegiality noted by Minnesota’s teachers (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Teacher Reported Support for TAP Core Elements

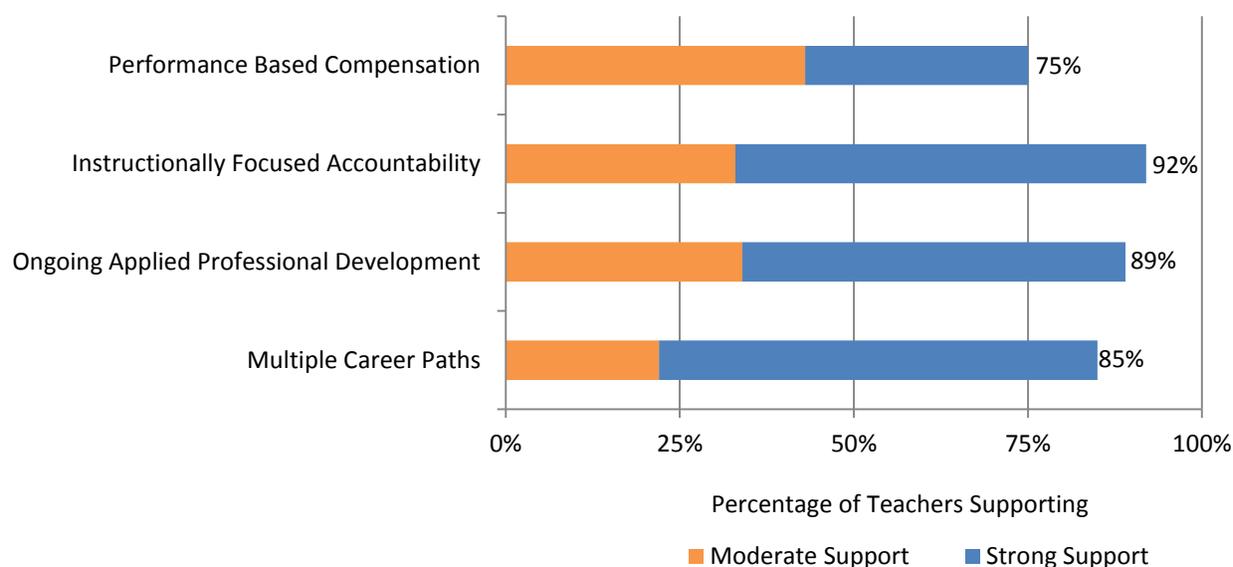
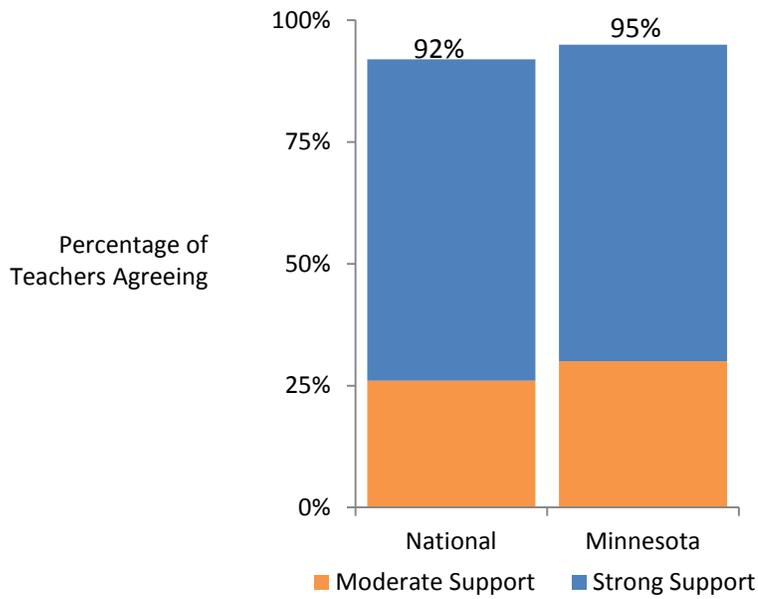
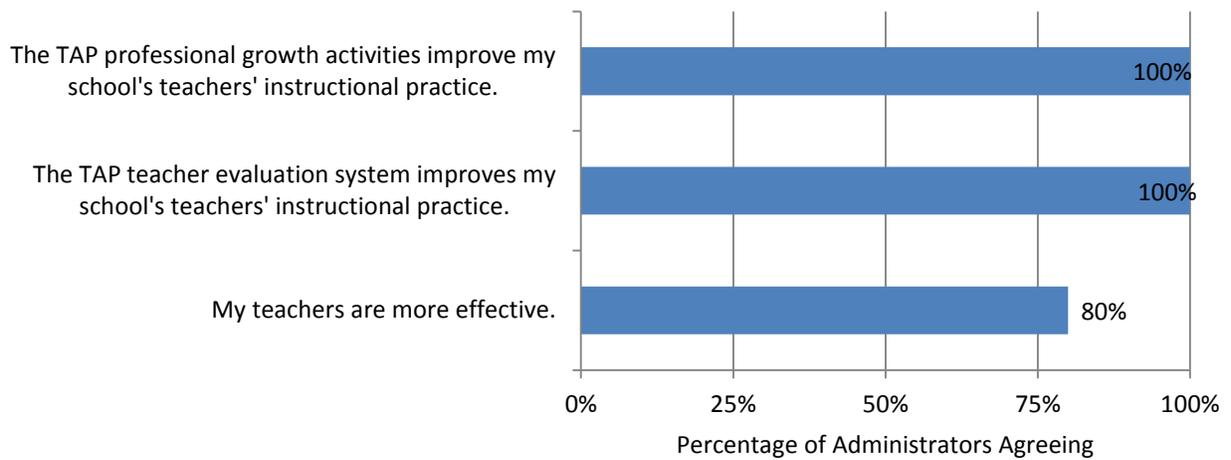


Figure 2: Teacher Reported Support for Collegiality



Administrators also reported high levels of support for TAP elements and believed that TAP was making noticeable differences in their schools. Administrator responses are shown in Table 1.

Figure 3: Administrator Responses to TAP Attitude Survey



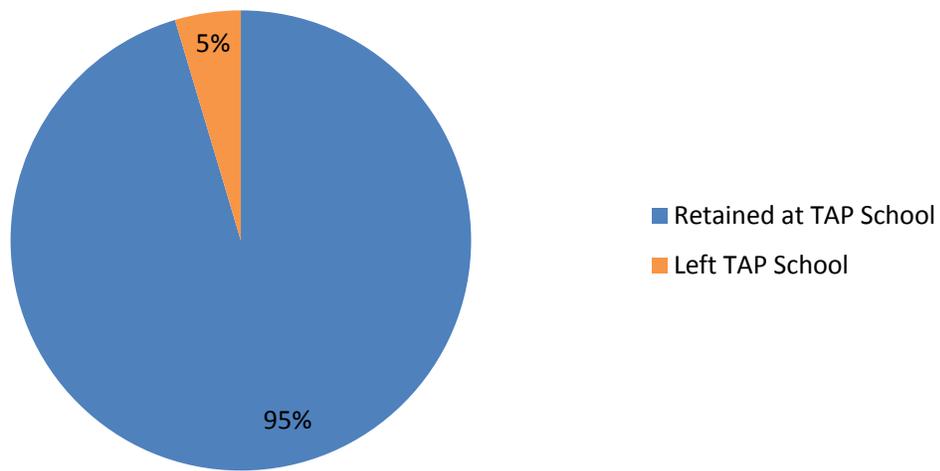
Teacher and Principal Effectiveness

Hmong College Prep Academy, Partnership Academy and Sojourner Truth Academy measured teacher and principal effectiveness during the 2012–2013 school year.

- 111 out of 128 teachers scored a 2.5 or higher on the TAP Teaching Standards Rubric
- 100 out of 109 teachers had a classroom value-added score of 3 or higher
- All 7 principals were designated as effective

Teacher Retention Rates

Nationally, the retention rate for teachers in high-need schools is approximately 80 percent; however, in Minnesota’s TAP schools, the retention rate for teachers is over 95 percent.



Additionally with regard to retention rates, 80 percent of Minnesota’s TAP administrators agree that the TAP System has increased the quantity of applicants for open teaching positions, made it easier to hire good teachers and helped retain effective teachers.