

**Professional Educator Program: Progress to Date
Year 2 Report
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Haven Public Schools asked a team of researchers at the Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut, to conduct independent research on the implementation of the Professional Educators Program (PEP) in the New Haven Public Schools. Our research was guided by the following questions.

1. *Have NHPS's human capital practices changed relative to before PEP was implemented?*
 - a. *To what degree does educator evaluation affect educators' practice?¹*
 - b. *To what degree is educator effectiveness considered in human capital decisions?*
 - c. *To what degree have human capital practices provided targeted support to high-need schools?*
2. *How do educators view specific changes to NHPS's human capital practices?*
3. *Did student performance improve after PEP implementation?*

In response to these questions, our research generated findings as follows:

First, teachers and school leaders perceived the Professional Educators Program (PEP) to have changed specific human capital practices in the district during the 2014-15 school year, largely in the areas of professional development, leadership opportunities, and compensation. Other core human capital practices, including evaluation, recruitment, hiring, and dismissal practices, were not reported to have changed in the district as a result of PEP. Educators further reported that they viewed the changes to professional development as the most substantial and the changes to compensation as relatively modest. Teachers and school leaders diverged in their perceptions of changes to expanded roles, with teachers divided on whether the new roles qualified as “teacher leadership” and school leaders excited about the ability to move into new leadership activities through their PEP roles.

Second, teachers tended to report that TEVAL improved their instruction, prompted them to work harder, and affected how they planned and prepared. However, the rate at which teachers agreed with these statements is lower than in 2013-14. The declines in the extent to which teachers report that TEVAL affects their planning and preparation and how hard they work could be interpreted as positive or negative. On the positive side, TEVAL paperwork could be easing. On the negative side, the attention of teachers and administrators could be focused on other matters, thus diluting the effect of TEVAL on these outcomes. Although the percentage of teachers reporting that TEVAL has improved their instruction has declined from 2013-14, it is still above the rates at which teachers reported an impact on their practice early in the evaluation system's existence.

Third, educators reported that educator effectiveness played a role in the selection process for various roles. However, some degree of confusion persists regarding how educator effectiveness factors into the selection and enactment of these roles and the broader PEP initiative.

Fourth, we found that the distribution of teacher roles across tiers is more equitable than in prior years. NHPS has made considerable progress in this regard.

Fifth, teachers and administrators holding expanded roles expressed overwhelmingly positive views of these roles. They reported that the roles were valuable, meaningful, and

¹ This research question is not in response to the TIF grant proposal. Instead, it builds on prior work we have done on teacher evaluation in NHPS.

professionally enhancing. Over 90% (and in several cases, 100%) of teachers in each role reported that their role was valuable to them. Participants reported that these roles enabled them to learn new strategies to improve their practice and enhance student learning, allowed them to have input in district-wide decisions, increased their professional networks, supported their need for autonomy, increased communication across schools, and provided excellent professional learning opportunities for them. Primary challenges to their work in these roles included lack of support from school and district administrators, teacher resistance, lack of time, and a lack of communication of the vision and expectations of the roles across various levels of the system. Within the roles, balancing individuals' need for autonomy and self-direction with schools' and the district's need for coherence remains an ongoing challenge and opportunity for NHPS.

Sixth, educators reported that the roles created through PEP were, in their view, improving educator practice, collaboration, and student performance. Although respondents identified areas to strengthen in the PEP initiative, they reported that the roles were beneficial to them, their school, and their students.

Based on these findings, we recommend the following:

1. Continue to support the expanded roles in New Haven Public Schools.
2. Clarify the definitions and expectations of expanded roles for teachers and administrators to all who interact with them.
3. Consider the balance between role-holders' need for autonomy and self-direction and schools' and the district's need for some degree of coherence.
4. Encourage and communicate full implementation of PEP across all human capital functions.
5. Encourage the integration of PEP with other initiatives.
6. Consider what it means to provide "targeted" support to high-needs schools.
7. Consider role-specific modifications.

INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to understand how the New Haven Public Schools (NHPS) is implementing a major initiative to reform human capital management, or the ways in which it attracts, develops, evaluates, and rewards its personnel. Human capital management is “the ‘people side’ of education reform,” (Strategic Management of Human Capital, 2009, p. 1). This represents a shift in focus from “curriculum and assessment to teacher and administrator recruitment, retention and compensation” (Strategic Management of Human Capital, 2009, p. 1). NHPS has received a Teacher Incentive Fund IV from the U.S. Department of Education to build its human capital system as outlined in its proposed Professional Educator Program (PEP). The theory of action underlying PEP is that aligning teacher and school leader recruitment, hiring, professional development, and evaluation to a larger, unified vision of teaching and learning will enhance student performance. New Haven is one of first urban districts to implement a coordinated approach to developing human capital.

Our study examines whether PEP has changed NHPS personnel practices, how and why such changes occurred, and the effects of these changes on educator practice and student performance. This report documents NHPS’s progress related to PEP during the 2014-15 school year. It is the second annual report completed by the research team at the request of the New Haven Public Schools.

In the 2013-14 round of data collection, we found that the district made notable progress in several key areas. First, NHPS established the Talent Council to govern PEP. This body draws diverse representatives and has developed a system and process through which to work together. Second, teachers participating in PEP expressed a high degree of enthusiasm for this work. They reported that their work through PEP is meaningful and impactful, with positive implications for their work with students in the classroom. Third, there was movement towards using PEP to provide particular support for high-needs schools. Lastly, our data suggested that PEP had drawn on educator effectiveness data and connected to teachers’ evaluation goals.

In last year's report, we specified the following areas for growth within PEP: articulating a unifying vision of PEP and communicating this vision within and beyond the district, increasing the involvement of and communication with principals, and broadening the focus of human capital reform to include recruitment and hiring.

On the whole, we found that expanded roles continue to be highly valued by those who hold them. School administrators and teachers reported that these roles were professionally enriching and provided opportunities for them to extend and deepen their networks within and outside their schools. In their view, these experiences led to improved leadership, teaching, and learning. Areas of growth for the district include clarifying and communicating the expectations of the role particularly as they relate to lines of authority and integration with other initiatives of the district and individual schools; further developing the human capital system so that the considerable work accomplished in launching these roles, reforming professional development, and shifting compensation is aligned with work to revise recruitment and hiring. Principals and teachers who hold roles continue to raise questions about how principals should play a part in these roles. Findings are outlined in more detail in the executive summary and in the sections that follow.

METHODS

Our study followed a mixed methods research design to understand educators' views on the implementation of PEP, their experiences with PEP, and early evidence on how PEP may be shaping educators' practices and students' opportunities to learn in schools. Between September 2014 and June 2015, we collected qualitative and quantitative data describing the implementation of new human capital practices (PEP) within the New Haven Public Schools.

We examined three research questions related to policy implementation, educator experiences and policy outcomes:

PEP Policy Implementation

1. *Have NHPS's human capital practices changed relative to before PEP was implemented?*
 - a. *To what degree does educator evaluation affect educators' practice?*
 - b. *To what degree is educator effectiveness considered in human capital decisions?*
 - c. *To what degree have human capital practices provided targeted support to high-need schools?*

Educator Experiences with PEP

2. *How do educators view specific changes to NHPS's human capital practices?*

PEP Policy Outcomes

3. *Did student performance improve after PEP implementation?*

Sample

To gain an understanding of how PEP was implemented in NHPS, we selected a sample including educators at the district and school level. These included district leaders, principals, and teachers. We interviewed four district leaders over the course of the 2014-15 school year. These leaders were selected because of their key roles in human capital development within the New Haven Public Schools. We interviewed 10 school leaders during 2014-15. These leaders were selected to include leaders of different levels (high school, elementary) and held expanded roles in the PEP initiative. Sampling of teachers proceeded in a different manner than in the 2013-14 data collection phase. In 2014-15, we conducted in-depth interviews with 21 New Haven teachers participating in new leadership roles created through PEP. In sampling these 21 teachers across the four roles, for each role we selected two teachers from a school where district administrators reported that the role was "working well." In this way, we sought to gather embedded, in-depth, case study data on particular sites that appeared to be supporting these roles. At the same time, for each role we also sampled teachers from outside these schools to gain insight into how these roles operated in different school contexts.

We also were participant observers in five meetings related to the PEP implementation. These included one Superintendent's Meeting led by the Talent Team and focused on describing the new roles for teachers and gathering participants' knowledge of other roles existing in the district; one meeting focused on the development and implementation of expanded roles for administrators; two professional development sessions for administrators in expanded roles (one Network Facilitator session, one Coach/Mentor session); and one meeting of district supervisors in charge of implementing the Curriculum Facilitator role.

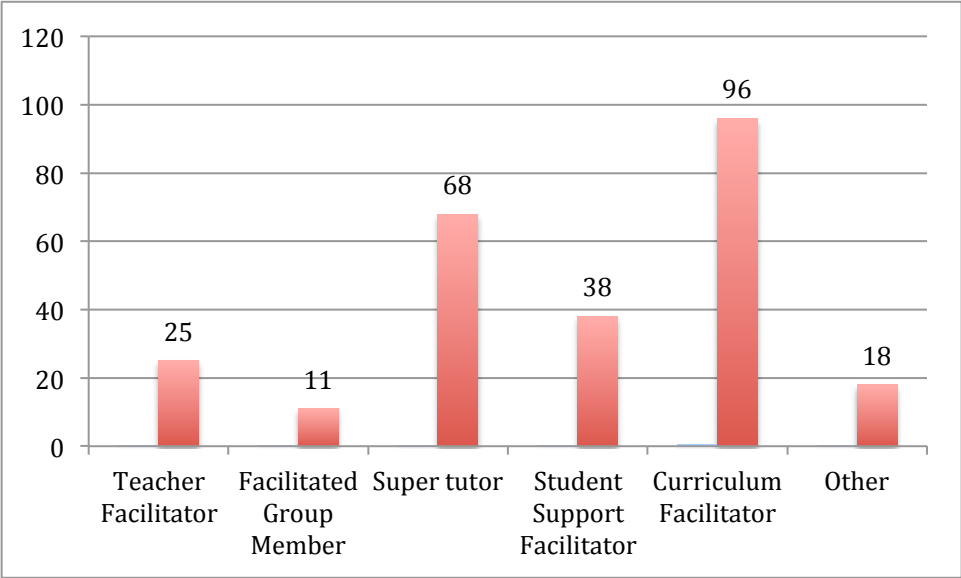
Table 1: Sample

Role	Total
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District Leaders	4
Network Facilitators	6
Coaches	2
Mentors	2
School Leaders	10
Teacher Facilitators	8
Curriculum Facilitators	5
Student Support Facilitators	4
Super Tutors	4
Total	35

In addition, we invited all teachers and school leaders holding expanded roles to participate in a survey in June 2015. In all, 256 teachers responded to the teacher survey. Response rates were lower than for the 2013-14 survey, but still represent a sizeable portion of the overall population of teachers holding roles. Based on a fall 2014 count of 649 teachers in expanded roles, this represents a 40% response rate. This rate is likely lower than the actual response rate given that district supervisors for roles report some attrition between the fall 2014 count and the June 2015 survey. Table 2 shows the raw numbers of teachers in each role who responded to the survey.

Table 2: Teacher Survey Sample



We also administered a survey to principals and assistant principals holding expanded roles. Seven of 22 administrators holding roles responded to this survey, for a response rate of 32%. We use these results sparingly throughout the report given the very small sample size.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and surveys. Questions were tailored to address the four major research questions outlined above. Interviews were

transcribed and coded using Dedoose qualitative software. Survey data were collected using Qualtrics. Data were analyzed using basic descriptive techniques.

FINDINGS

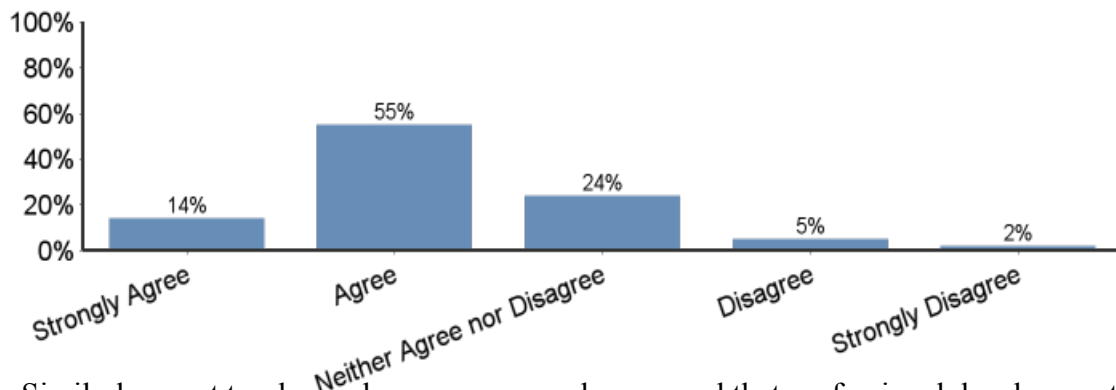
RESEARCH QUESTION 1: HAVE NHPS'S HUMAN CAPITAL PRACTICES CHANGED RELATIVE TO BEFORE PEP WAS IMPLEMENTED?

One major purpose of the TIFF grant is to fund the transformation of NHPS's human capital functions with educator effectiveness at the center. Thus, we examined whether key human capital functions in the district had changed over the past school year.

Teacher Perspectives

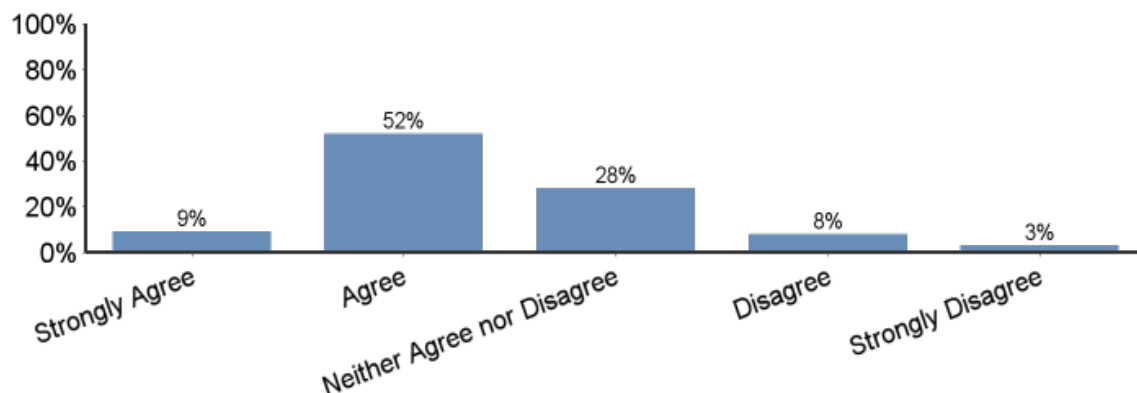
As with the results of our program evaluation for 2013-14, the majority of teachers interviewed and surveyed reported that human capital practices in the district changed in 2014-15. For instance, 69% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that there had been changes in leadership opportunities for teachers in the past schoolyear (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. "There have been changes in leadership opportunities for teachers this year in the NHPS." (n=232)



Similarly, most teachers who were surveyed concurred that professional development in the district had changed in the past school year. A majority of teachers who responded to the survey (61%) agreed or strongly agreed that there had been changes in professional development in NHPS this year. This is consistent with the results from 2013-14. Few teachers (11%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Figure 2. "There have been changes in professional development in the NHPS this year." (n=233)



In interviews, teachers and school leaders described specific changes to leadership opportunities, professional development, and compensation. We describe their views below.

Teacher Facilitators reported that one of the primary changes to human capital has been improved professional development. The extent to which professional development improved seemed to vary by school and by subject areas.

With regard to compensation, teacher facilitators reported that generally it has been improving. Several specifically mentioned appreciation for the stipend related to the Teacher Facilitator role. M stated “[T]he pay is not that bad compared to what it would have been, you know years ago. I think our Unions have done a pretty good job of getting us like more of a competitive salary.”

However, two teacher facilitators felt that leadership opportunities were limited. This, in part, was attributed to the lack of department heads and other formal hybrid roles at their school. M stated: “[T]here’s really no growth opportunities unless you want to be a principal. That’s my biggest issue is you know like a principal would make twice as much as I make right now and there’s no like in between job and salary. You know where you can kind of make between the two salaries and have more leadership responsibilities. Whereas other districts will have those types of positions where you’re a leader in the school but you’re not the principal.” M’s colleague K was also reluctant to consider the Teacher Facilitator position leadership. He stated,

I don’t view it [Teacher Facilitator] as a leadership role... The principal is a leadership role... I would like to see teachers as leaders, but it’s not treated that way.... if there’s a disciplinary issue, you don’t touch it. You can’t do anything. It goes directly to administration. If there’s a role of, I don’t know, there’s a parent issue, it directly goes to administration. So anything outside of, immediately outside the classroom, I mean, you should have some type of control over that or be able to impact that, but you don’t.

By contrast, Super Tutors in a different school reported that many leadership opportunities existed within the school. For example, one teacher stated, “I’ve been here for three years and every year I’ve had teachers either move up in their leaderships roles or move on to higher positions. It’s been like that for as long as I’ve been here.” A teacher who was new to the district reported, “From what I can tell there’s a lot of opportunities...”

For the most part, Curriculum Facilitators did not believe that NHPS’s human capital practices had changed significantly. They did not believe that teacher evaluation changed in the past year. They were somewhat split on whether or not they thought teacher leadership opportunities had changed. This largely depended on if they saw the PEP roles as leadership positions. For example, one CF reported no change in leadership opportunities and also thought that teachers did not see the roles as leadership positions:

I don’t think that teachers see this (Curriculum Facilitator) as a leadership opportunity. I think that they see this as a little bit of extra work for some money... I don’t think that they think that this is a stepping stone toward something greater.

Another CF, on the other hand, said that she did see the roles as leadership positions and, as a result, thought that there were more leadership opportunities.

I mean, I think it [the Professional Educators Program] did give us an opportunity to be in leadership... I mean, within your building you could be in a leadership role [prior to the PEP]... but that's not an extra. You don't get paid extra. It's within your school day. So, I think it's nice for teachers to have the opportunity to share what they know and get paid for it...

The only changes in compensation that participants reported were in the roles themselves. For example, one said, "Now you get paid to do something extra. Yeah, whereas before we didn't get anything."

Curriculum facilitators reported no changes in promotion in the district. Some did see the role as a way to demonstrate leadership capacity, but did not think that it would lead to any form of promotion, as illustrating in the following comment:

No, because there's still the same positions we've always had, so there's really nowhere to go, so I'd say no. You know, I think this is a way to be promoted, maybe to be a coach or you know, get yourself more into administration, but you know, there's only so many positions that are needed there, so. They are always there, anyway. It's just a way to have yourself be seen, perhaps.

Teachers reported the most substantial change in the area of professional development. They reported that there was more professional development, more teacher input in professional development, and generally more effective professional development.

[W]e've had a lot more of it [professional development] than ever before. In math and especially in reading... I have seen curriculum facilitators... so we do have some more teacher input.

We used to have some professional development -- it's like you just want to bang your head against the wall. Yeah, so, I mean, maybe I felt, maybe because I'm presenting. I don't know. But I feel like we're at least presenting meaningful information that's going to be helpful to teachers.

Student Support Facilitators identified several changes. First, they noted that the TIFF grant had been used to facilitate an increase in teacher leadership. One SSF noted,

I think the grant money specifically has really gotten more people involved. I think the right people involved. The people who are ambitious. The people who want to make change. The people who -- you know, the right people for this. So I have been happy with that, with the change in that grant money and what it represents and what it has done for the district this last year.

Some SSF also noted that PEP has changed professional development. For example, one SSF stated, "There is a lot of professional development this year. More so than previous years. It's positive in the sense that it's constructive. It's meaningful. It's applicable..."

School Leader Perspectives

Similar to teachers in new leadership roles, school leaders in new roles perceived PEP to have created some changes to human capital practices, largely in terms of the types of leadership roles available to school leaders within the district and increased quality of professional development. Other core human capital practices, including evaluation, hiring, and dismissal practices, were not reported to have changed in the district as a result of PEP.

Several school leaders were quick to point out that their perception of PEP was couched in an awareness of how early NHPS is in implementing new administrator roles. As one school leader summarized, "Number one, I think [PEP] is a good thing. Number two, I think it's going in the right direction. And number three, it's just too early to - I think this thing is, what, maybe a year, maybe two [years] old?" Others cited human capital practices that have not changed, such as evaluation, or flaws in the selection process for leadership roles. Among the school leaders interviewed, there was an overwhelmingly hopeful attitude towards the continuation of PEP and its potential impact on improving human capital practices.

Professional Development

Regardless of their role, school leaders were enthusiastic about the additional professional development that they had received to prepare for the new leadership roles. School leaders tended to focus on professional development as the core of the theory of action for PEP. As one principal stated, "I think the main focus of this grant is to build leadership capacity." All of the school leaders serving in new leadership roles who had participated in our study gave strong, positive feedback about the quality of their own professional development and appreciate the ways in which PEP is shifting the model for professional development in New Haven to focus on peer learning and preparation for multiple pathways.

However, school leaders were not always clear on the boundaries of the PEP work and the central office's broader agenda. For example, one school leader stated, "I've had some really good professional development this year. I don't know if that's a function of the TIF grant, perhaps it is. Maybe that's not clear to me." Several Network Facilitators expressed confusion over why they were being asked to participate in Superintendent's Meetings with an agenda dictated by the district's vision, rather than serving as a facilitator of peer-led learning focused on participants' problems of practice.

Evaluation

When asked if either teacher evaluations or principal evaluations had changed at all with new roles through PEP, most principals said that they had not. One principal responded, "Not really, no. I mean, I still do all mine the same." Another school leader, when asked if his evaluation as a principal had changed, also replied in the negative.

I don't know concretely if I could point to anything that has shifted. I haven't had a problem since we have come up with TEVAL and PEVAL. I haven't really had a problem with how I'm evaluated, but I don't know that I have seen a concrete shift in how my directors specifically are evaluating what we do related to this piece.

One principal even indicated that he deliberately separated his role as a school leader for his PEVAL and his contribution as a Network Facilitator. When prompted to consider whether he would ever use his new role as evidence of professional growth or progress towards a leadership goal, he responded with an unsure, "I guess." Overall, school leaders do not appear to have drawn connections between their work with new leadership roles through PEP, for both their teachers and themselves, and existing educator evaluation as a lever for shaping practice.

Compensation

All of the school leaders participating in our study stated that they were not motivated by the compensation for new leadership roles. When asked about the compensation attached to PEP roles, most declared that they did not know how much the compensation was (even if they later referenced the \$5,000 amount of the stipend) and many referenced that they had not yet received a check for this work. Instead, most described the opportunity as attractive because it allows them to gain new experiences and to serve others with their expertise. For example, one school leader stated, "I have no idea what I'm paid. I really don't. I haven't received a check or anything. I'm doing it strictly for the experience." School leaders reported that the extra effort was worth the time, though the additional compensation was more symbolic than an equal trade.

While school leaders acknowledged that compensation had changed through PEP, a few pointed out that those in new leadership roles were paid to do additional work. This contrasts with new roles for teachers, in which their leadership activities were described primarily as work they were already doing. School leaders also did not connect the compensation of these new leadership roles to other district reforms, such as broader efforts to pay educators based on their performance. Only one principal explicitly juxtaposed the additional compensation attached to each role with more global changes the district has explored based on performance, saying

Whoever wants to participate in these different roles, they do have the opportunity to apply. And then by applying and actually working on those roles, they do have the opportunity to get compensation. You know, but it is not on how well or bad they're doing the role. It's just on participating. They participate.

Summary

On the whole, teachers and school leaders perceived PEP to have created some changes to human capital practices during the 2014-15 school year, largely in the areas of professional development, leadership opportunities, and compensation. Other core human capital practices, including evaluation, hiring, and dismissal practices, were not reported to have changed in the district as a result of PEP.

In interviews, educators reported that they viewed the changes to professional development as most substantial and the changes to compensation as more modest. Teachers and school leaders diverged in their perceptions of changes to expanded roles, with teachers divided on whether the new roles qualified as "teacher leadership" and school leaders excited about the ability to move into new leadership activities through their PEP roles.

In particular, some educators' reluctance to call expanded roles for teachers "teacher leadership roles" raises important questions about the new roles introduced by NHPS. First, is this finding problematic? Is something lost if teachers, in particular, do not view the new roles as "leadership"? More broadly, what prevents these teachers from perceiving the Teacher Facilitator role as a leadership role? Is it because these roles are largely independent, as opposed to ensconced in a career ladder or lattice? Is it that the stipend is not large enough to warrant the leadership moniker? Or is it that the authority granted Teacher Facilitators does not extend far enough to be considered true "leadership"?

**RESEARCH QUESTION 1A:
TO WHAT DEGREE DOES EDUCATOR EVALUATION AFFECT EDUCATORS’
PRACTICE?²**

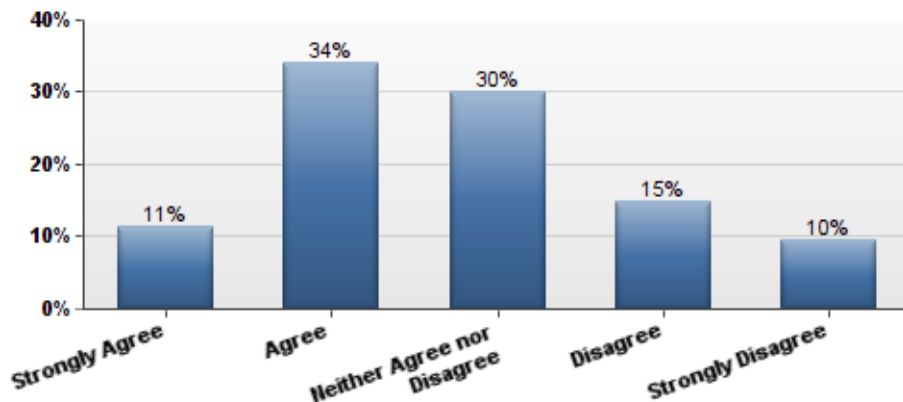
We collected data on educators' experiences with TEVAL and PEVAL as well as the extent to which they thought educator evaluation was integrated with PEP. As with results from 2013-14, participants' views on the effects of educator evaluation on their practice varied.

Teachers' Views

Views on Educator Evaluation

Almost half (45%) of teachers surveyed reported that TEVAL improved their instruction (see Figure 3). Almost one-third (30%) of those surveyed were neutral on this question, and 25% of teachers disagreed with the statement. In 2013-14, 48% to 62% of teachers reported that TEVAL improved their instruction.

Figure 3. “TEVAL improves my instruction” (n=229)



Interviews with teachers provided information about why some teachers supported this statement. Teachers reported that TEVAL clarified what was expected in the classroom and prompted self-reflection based on data. For example, one Super Tutor said: “TEVAL makes you look at what you’re doing, not from your personal biases but what the data shows. You get better and better at learning how to provide evidence of what you’re doing in your classroom.”

Another teacher in his second year of teaching had just completed his mid year conference and had this to say about TEVAL, “I think it’s not terribly invasive. It’s not terribly hard. Do you know what I mean? I’m not saying they don’t evaluate you, thoroughly. They do. It’s easy for me to fill out the necessary paperwork and have the necessary materials to show my instructional manager. It’s not a hassle.”

² This research question is not in response to the TIF grant proposal. Instead, it builds on prior work we have done on teacher evaluation in NHPS to inform revisions to TEVAL.

Some teachers reported that TEVAL lays out what is expected of teachers in NHPS. Specifically, one Student Support Facilitator stated it “reinforces the practice of just collaboration and driving home instruction, classroom management, and monitoring the progress.”

Interviews also provided details about those who responded that TEVAL did not affect their practice. For example, some teachers reported that TEVAL was not being implemented effectively at their school. M stated, “[W]e’ve followed the same TEVAL as the rest of the District, but we’ve had it for a few years now...[and] we still don’t get observed very much.”

K also reported that he had been observed sporadically. In fact, the lack of feedback was the motivation behind K volunteering for the Teacher Facilitator role. He stated,

Well, I don’t think there’s any teeth in it [TEVAL]. It’s not as, what do you want to say, rigorous as people may think it is, and I can just talk for myself and colleagues I’ve talked to, but we get no feedback. You know, we just fill it out and they write whether they agree with our ratings or not, but as far as feedback, you get none. And again, that’s an impetus for me to do this is I want us to, I’m used to getting feedback, being mentored, and there’s no mentorship. So the teacher facilitator allows us to mentor each other. You know, that’s really the biggest takeaway for me is the mentorship.

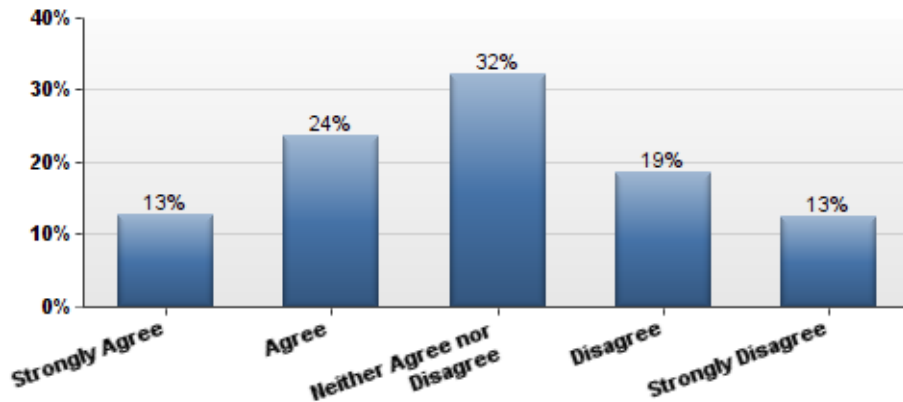
Teachers also voiced concern about the subjectivity of TEVAL. One SSF stated, “I’m not a fan of TEVAL. I think it’s too subjective and it depends on the interactions between the (IM) and the teacher.” Another SSF agreed: “Teachers can game the system.”

Some teachers also reported that the paperwork and ratings associated with TEVAL had reduced time were overshadowing the substantive interactions between teachers and administrations in the context of evaluation :

It’s supposed to be that conversation right and the goal setting and thinking and trying to plan for the year and be reflective at the end of the year and kind of the checking of boxes and tallying up how many people scored proficient takes away from that.

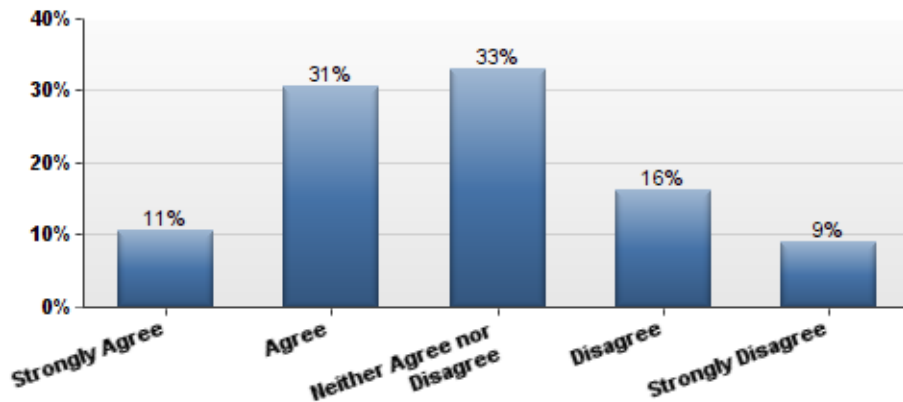
In addition, we asked teachers about whether TEVAL causes them to work harder. We found that a lower percentage of teachers agreed with this statement than agreed with the statement about TEVAL improving their practice (Figure 4). Thirty-seven percent of teachers agreed/strongly agreed with this statement. This is a decline from 2013-14 but still a larger proportion than those who disagreed with this statement.

Figure 4: “As a result of TEVAL, I work harder.” (n=232)



In addition, we asked whether TEVAL changed how teachers planned and prepared. We found that 42% of teachers agreed/strongly agreed with this statement (Figure 5). This is substantially larger than the 25% who disagreed with the statement but is a decrease from 2013-14.

Figure 5: “TEVAL changes how I plan and prepare for my instruction.” (n=232)



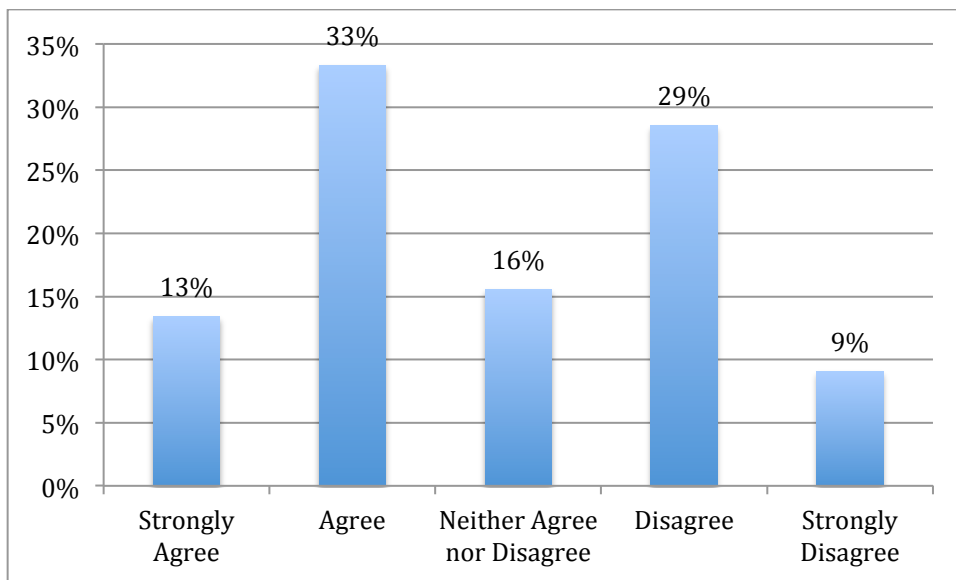
On the whole, teachers tended to agree that TEVAL changed their practice, prompted them to work harder, and affected their planning and preparation. However, the rates at which teachers agreed with these statements declined from 2013-14 and non-trivial proportions of respondents disagreed with these statements, pointing to room for TEVAL implementation to improve in years to come.

Integration of Educator Evaluation and Expanded Roles

A central piece of the Professional Educators Program is to connect all human capital practices to educator evaluation. Thus, we asked educators what role TEVAL and PEVAL played in the expanded roles they occupied through PEP.

Almost half (46%) of teachers surveyed reported that their goals in their leadership role were tied to TEVAL (see Figure 6). About 38% of teachers disagreed/strongly agreed with this statement.

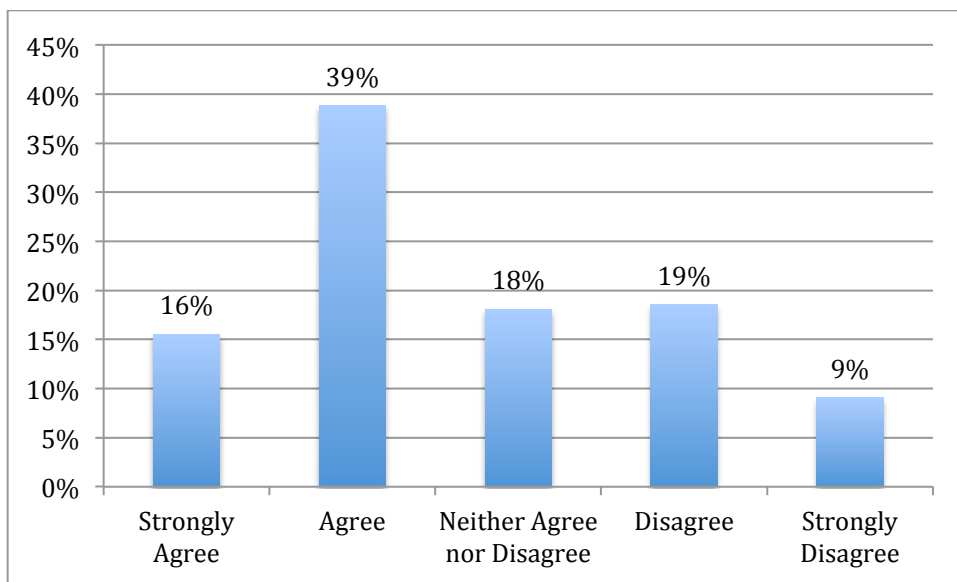
Figure 6. “My goals in [leadership role] were tied to TEVAL.” (n=231)



In part, this finding can be explained by the separation between some roles and teachers' daily work in classrooms. For example, one Curriculum Facilitator wrote, " My work as a Curriculum Facilitator has been completely independent of my role as a teacher in my school." Other teachers were not aware they could make connections between their roles. For instance, one Curriculum facilitator wrote, "I was not aware I could count my role as a CF in my TEVAL document. I assumed my TEVAL was evaluating my role as a classroom instruction ONLY." This may speak to lack of communication between supervisors for the expanded roles and Instructional Managers, who are largely principals and assistant principals.

A larger percentage reported that their TEVAL scores reflected their work in their role. Over half (55%) of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, whereas 28% disagreed/strongly disagreed (see Figure 7). This finding may be due to the high rates at which teachers report that their roles affected their instruction.

Figure 7: “My TEVAL evaluation reflects my work in this leadership role.” (n=239)



Summary

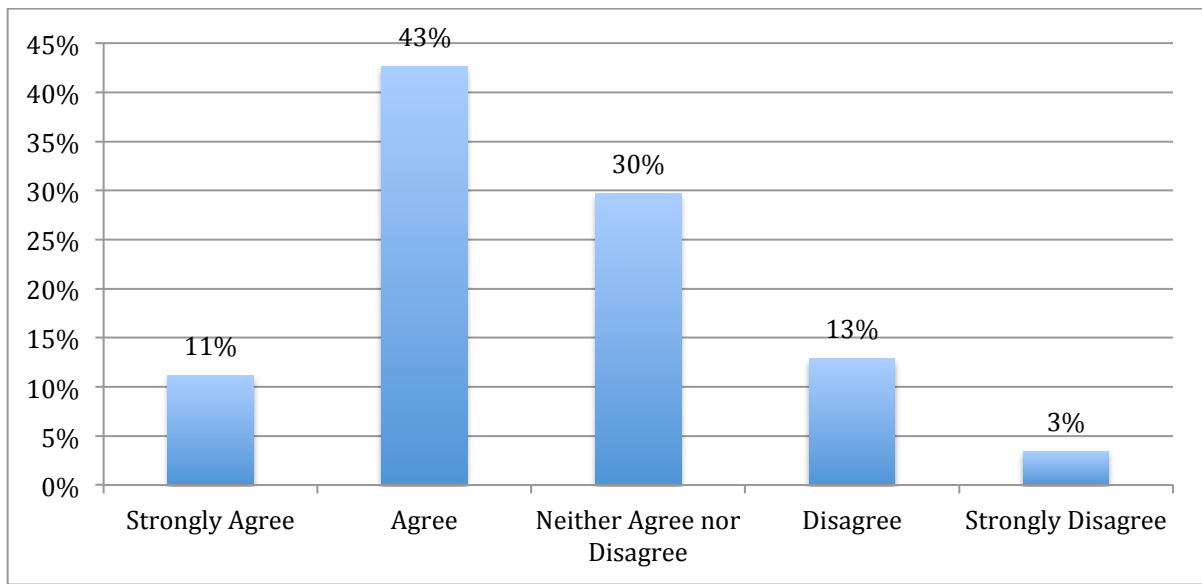
On the whole, teachers tended to report that TEVAL improved their instruction, prompted them to work harder, and affected how they planned and prepared. However, the rate at which teachers agreed with these statements is lower than in 2013-14. These decreases in the extent to which teachers report that TEVAL affects their planning and preparation and how hard they work could be interpreted as positive or negative. On the positive side, TEVAL paperwork could be easing. On the negative side, the attention of teachers and administrators could be focused on other matters, thus diluting the effect of TEVAL on these outcomes. Although the percentage of teachers reporting that TEVAL has improved their instruction has declined from 2013-14, it is still above the rates at which teachers reported an impact on their practice early in the evaluation system's existence.

**RESEARCH QUESTION 1B:
TO WHAT DEGREE IS EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS CONSIDERED IN HUMAN
CAPITAL DECISIONS?**

We also inquired into the extent to which educator effectiveness is considered in human capital decisions. Educators' evaluation ratings on TEVAL and PEVAL play a role in their selection for these roles. We gather data on educators' awareness of this aspect of the program.

As with the results from 2013-14, the majority of teachers surveyed reported that educator effectiveness is considered in the selection process for expanded roles. As shown in Figure 8, 54% of teacher agreed or strongly agreed that "Educator effectiveness is a primary factor in deciding which teachers are offered leadership opportunities."

Figure 8: "Educator effectiveness is a primary factor in deciding which teachers are offered leadership opportunities." (n=239)



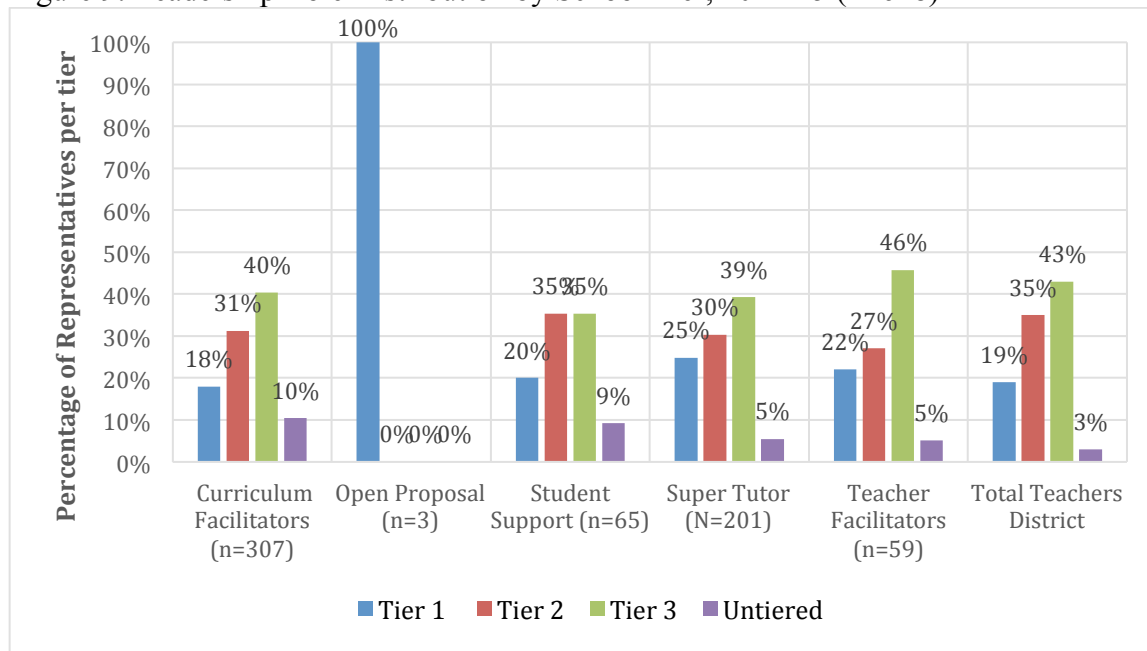
However, a full 30% were neutral on this question, likely reflecting their lack of access to how selection occurs. For example, teachers reported that they understood that teachers qualified for roles by attaining a certain TEVAL rating. However, their knowledge of the details of selection was relatively vague, as reflected in this statement by a Super Tutor: "My original understanding of this was that if you were an exemplary teacher, you would have the opportunity to, you know, do these extra things and get paid." This suggests that communication about this aspect of PEP could be clearer.

**RESEARCH QUESTION 1C:
TO WHAT DEGREE HAVE HUMAN CAPITAL PRACTICES PROVIDED TARGETED
SUPPORT TO HIGH-NEED SCHOOLS?**

In prior years, we found significant differences across the three tiers in the degree to which teachers held expanded roles. Specifically, teachers in Tier 1 schools were overrepresented among leadership roles and those from Tier 3 were underrepresented. For example, in 2013-14, teachers from Tier 1 constituted 19% of the district, but held 41% of Teacher Facilitator positions. Teachers from Tier 3 constituted 43% of the district, but held 35% of these positions.

For 2014-15, we found that the tiers were represented much more proportionately than in past years. As depicted in Figure 9 below, Tier 1 teachers constitute 19% of the district and hold between 18 and 25% of the roles with the exception of Open Proposal positions, all three of which are held by teachers from Tier 1 schools. Tier 2 teachers are slightly under-represented among Teacher Facilitators (27% of TF's but 35% districtwide) and Tier 3 teachers are under-represented among Student Support Facilitators (35% of SSF's but 43% districtwide).

Figure 9: Leadership Role Distribution by School Tier, 2014-15 (n=648)



On the whole, this represents a more equitable distribution of roles than in prior years. In the coming year, the district should consider what it means in "targeting" support to high-need schools. Does this suggest that teachers in Tiers 2 and 3 should hold a disproportionately larger share of roles than their counterparts in Tier 1? In addition, the district might consider whether certain roles should be held in greater proportions in various Tiers. For example, if Tier 3 schools enroll students with the greatest needs, perhaps more Super Tutor and Student Support Facilitator roles should be allocated to these schools.

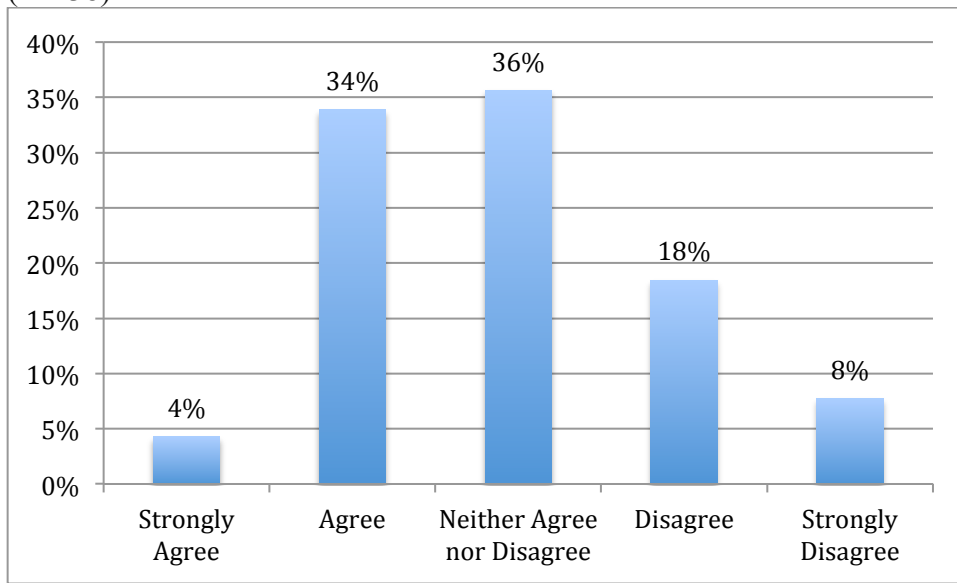
RESEARCH QUESTION 2
HOW DO EDUCATORS VIEW SPECIFIC CHANGES TO NHPS’S HUMAN CAPITAL PRACTICES?

As with 2013-14, we find more positive views about specific changes to the district's human capital practices at the teacher level than at the principal/Assistant Principal level. Teachers' perceptions of PEP and the expanded roles in particular remain very positive. School leaders' perceptions towards this initiative appear more positive than in 2013-14.

Teachers' Views

Teachers remain positive about professional development changes in the district. As shown in Figure 10 below, in 2014-15, 38% agreed/strongly agreed with the statement that changes in professional development were tailored to their needs, with 36% neutral and 26% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement.

Figure 10: “The changes in professional development have been tailored to my specific needs.” (n=238)

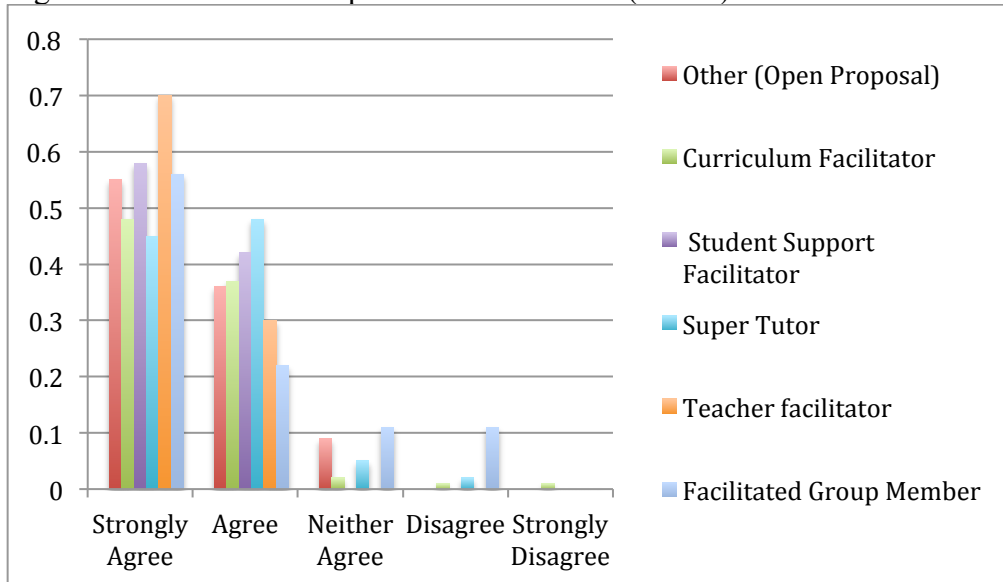


In comparison, 66% of those surveyed in 2013-14 agreed/strongly agreed with this statement. This is a significant decline that is worth further examination. On the open response survey section, one teacher wrote “Having professional development choices has been very good for me,” while others offered, “While the teachers are leading workshops and PD, they have been on topics that are not useful, nor improved my practice in any way” and “No one has ever asked me what I would need in terms of professional development. It is one size fits all.”

In contrast to their sentiments about professional development, teachers continue to be very positive about their roles. As shown in Figure 11, the large majority of teacher surveyed found the roles to be valuable. All--100%--of Teacher Facilitators and 100% of Student Support Facilitators agreed or strongly agreed that they found their experience in the role to be valuable.

Similarly, 96% of Curriculum Facilitators, 93% of Super Tutors, 91% of those in Open Proposal roles, and 78% of facilitated group members reported that these roles proved valuable to them.

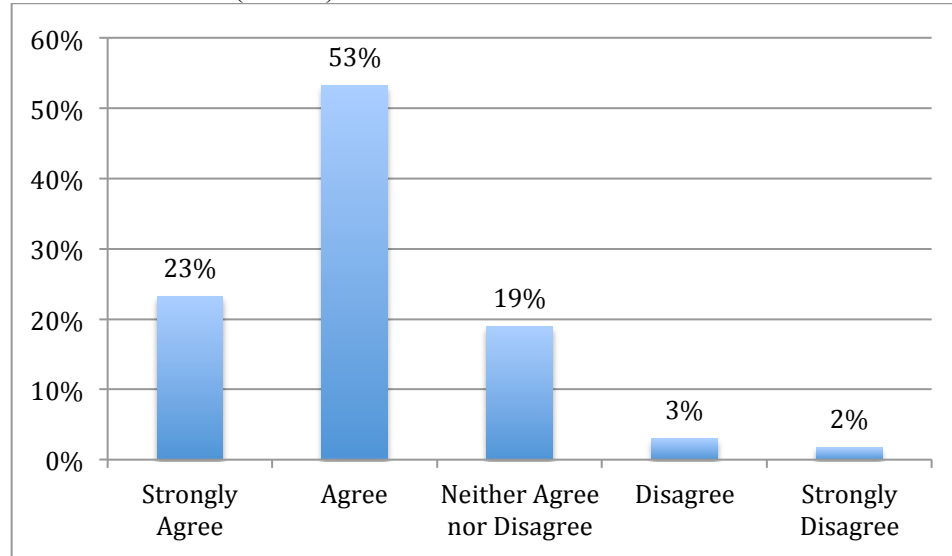
Figure 11: “I found this experience valuable...” (n=249)



For example, one Super Tutor stated, "This experience gave me purpose this school year. The students needed the support and we had a wonderful working relationship." Echoing this statement, 86% of Super Tutors reported that holding this role gave them "a greater sense of purpose as an educator."

In addition, teachers generally felt that these roles would help them perform at a higher level. As shown in Figure 12, 76% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that these leadership opportunities "will help me do my best work in the New Haven Public Schools." Only 5% of those surveyed disagreed with this statement. Teachers describe the benefits of these roles in more detail below.

Figure 12: “New leadership opportunities will help me do my best work in the New Haven Public Schools.” (n=240)



What are the benefits of the role, according to participants?

Teacher Facilitators

Overall, the Teacher Facilitator (TF) role at the X School appeared to be functioning well. The facilitators at the school reported improvements in both professional development and teacher practice at the school. It appeared that initiation of the role enabled teachers at the school to build strong networks, which, according to participants, led to improved teacher practice.

Prior to the initiation of the Teacher Facilitator role, teachers at X School reported feeling isolated from one another. M had no interaction with teachers outside of the English department throughout the day. Similarly, K spent nearly his entire school day in the Special Education classroom. Teachers reported that they had little opportunity to develop professional relationships or participate in meaningful professional development prior to the introduction of the TF role. As M stated,

Normally the administration runs [PD] and everyone hates it and it’s horrible and they just keep thrusting new stuff on us and never follow through with anything and it’s been pretty miserable.

In fact, inadequate professional development was the motivation that led K to volunteer for the Teacher Facilitator role. He stated, “I felt that our professional development was horrible, and I’m in it to try to make a difference – to make it better, so it’s more tangible and makes us better teachers.” This theme was reiterated across the district as revealed during the focus group discussions. In the focus group, R stated, “I basically became a Teacher Facilitator because in our building there was no collaboration at all.” Prior to the initiation of the Teacher Facilitator role, these teachers reported little teacher collaboration or networking across the district.

With the introduction of the Teacher Facilitator role, administration at X School decided to dedicate professional development time to support the role. Additionally, administrators at X mandated that teachers join a facilitator group. This is unique in the district. Dedicated time to TF groups and school-wide participation led to the creation of networks and improved professional development at the school, according to the facilitators. They reported that teachers were interacting across disciplines and learning from one another. As K stated, “the teachers

know that we have this as an instrument to try to make change where we didn't have this before. So yes, it's definitely been beneficial. Hearing other perspectives from other teachers is phenomenal." M agreed that this collaboration affected her instructional practice.

[I]t's been nice just to see what other teachers are doing and you know be able to talk with people you don't normally get to talk with much...I think the problem of practice was good because you get some feedback and sometimes you just get stuck in doing something a certain way and when you get more ideas it pushes you to kind of go outside of your routine of what you always do...it's definitely reinvigorated me to try new things.

A Facilitator Group Member last year had such a positive experience she volunteered to become a lead facilitator this year. She stated,

Last year, I was a member for a group and we -- I thought it went really well. We learned a lot from each other, kind of shared things and we were supportive, so this year I decided I would like to do Critical Friends and it has worked out well. I think it is a good support group for our school because we don't meet as a team anymore just because of time constraints, so it is very helpful, I think, for all us. And, it's nonjudgmental, so, I think it works well.

In addition to providing release time to the teachers at X, the principal also gave the facilitators autonomy to determine the focus of their groups. For example, M's group used the Critical Friends Group® to discuss instructional practice, while K's group discussed classroom management and school discipline policies. Autonomy was an important aspect to the TFs' perceptions of the role. As M stated,

The way I look at the role is I have the opportunity to work with colleagues on things that we want to work with, without necessarily having much, if any, administrator input. So it gives us the opportunity to meet about what we want to meet with in our group and work on as educators.

By regularly allocating time for the facilitator groups to meet and by providing groups the freedom to operate as they deemed fit, administrators at School X supported Teacher Facilitators in key ways. More significantly, the administration demonstrated a level of trust in the teachers to lead their own development. With regard to teacher-led professional development, K stated that the principal "respected it." This trusting culture "shows that administrators are willing to let teachers take on true leadership and development in their school" (M).

Super Tutors

According to our interviews, the main benefits of the role were an opportunity to help students and the chance to be paid for work teachers felt was valuable. All of the teachers interviewed expressed a desire to help their students. They were grateful to be given, as one teacher said, "the opportunity to impact students' lives more so than just in the classroom."

One ST described how he differentiated for the diverse needs of the students who attended a session on any particular day. One of the teachers talked about using his multiple certification areas to help kids in his tutoring session after school.

I actually had nineteen kids in the room at the same time. When they sign in they sign in for the class that they're there for so, like, some are in for, you know, the introduction to engineering, some of them are in their for digital electronics, some are in there for

algebra 2, geometry and I actually had civil and calculus. So I had six different courses out of the nineteen people that were there that were going on so I had to, kind of, say, "Okay, let's get the math people here. Let's get the IED people here. Let's get the DE people here." And, kind of, - - I had a full room. It was really interesting and - - to be able to, you know, kind of walk around, and facilitate and answer questions when possible. The two hours that we were in there was, like, by the time it got to 3:55 I looked at my watch and I'm like, "Oh my God I'm sorry guys we've got to clean up." And everybody stayed the whole time and a lot of progress was being made and a couple of kids even said thank you at the end of the session.

One teacher felt that having super tutor sessions allowed him to maintain rigor in his class because he could give new students or struggling students additional help with content during the after school help sessions: "I can just say for me, knowing that I have this opportunity to help the kids outside of school helps me maintain the rigor within the course."

Teachers were not just using the super tutor sessions for homework help but also using the time for student enrichment. Teachers collaboratively monitored club activities like Science Olympiad.

We have a number of Super Tutors here and sometimes we collaborate on certain things. For instance with the clubs, there are a couple of teachers that do that together who run a club together. And then they also have their own day where they do something else that they help students. So the teachers, they are using that time to not just address one issue but address multiple issues.

Super Tutors expressed gratitude that schools and Tutors were given the autonomy to decide how to best carry out the role. For example, one ST stated, "[T]he great thing about the way Super Tutors are run in this district is they don't tell you what to do. It's not like they take an idea and they say no, that's a horrible idea, you shouldn't do that. It's more like, how is that going to benefit your students and our students?"

Super Tutors also indicated that compensation for the role helped them justify spending more time at school away from their families and, for some, their secondary employment. For example, one ST stated: "It gives me an opportunity to take less time doing my private job and now spend more time helping facilitate and foster the growth of the students here."

From a slightly different angle, a colleague reported that the compensation made her feel like the work she was already doing to tutor students was valued: "I think the biggest impact on the Super Tutor thing is for me that it makes me feel like what I am doing has been noticed and appreciated and now they're going to give me a little extra money for doing it." A colleague echoed this sentiment, suggesting that the district's decision to include the Super Tutor role in TIF communicated the message that "[W]e're going to recognize your work and we're also going to incentivize it."

School leaders with teachers serving as Super Tutors in their schools also reported positive experiences with the extension of teachers' practice to hours beyond the school day. One principal described how her Super Tutors have connected their new role directly to their classroom practice, which allows students to benefit from customized, extended hours of support.

I think Super Tutors appreciate the autonomy of selecting their group, selecting the hours in which they support students, and selecting their materials. I mean that is pretty neat

particularly if they are your own students that you have during the day it can really pick up and hone in on what they need and it's not a prescribed program that may not fit the needs of the child but you're being told to use.

Principals expressed confidence in their assessment that it was having a positive impact in their schools. One principal described how she used grade level meetings and SRBI meetings to monitor Super Tutors' impact on their students' progress. She regularly asked her Super Tutors,

“What are the things that you're working with these students,” or, “What is the data that actually helps us identify that this student is moving along, that this student is making progress?” So that's the way to monitor, you know, through grade levels or SRBI meetings. We have an opportunity to discuss with teachers and to find out, “Okay, what else have you done as a super tutor to see that these students are making progress?”

Curriculum Facilitators

One of the main benefits of the role, according to participants, is that it offers teachers opportunities to work with other teachers. Curriculum facilitators indicated that teachers are more receptive to professional development delivered by other teachers (i.e. CFs). Teachers enjoy getting trained by teachers, teachers enjoy hearing what their colleagues who are also teachers, in classrooms in particular, are doing.

Curriculum facilitators also reported that they believe the role has a positive impact on the classroom practice of teachers who receive the professional development and on the facilitators themselves.

I think it's been important because I've brought a lot of good ideas to other teachers. And I think that, you know, maybe we can just—it's—maybe it's small, but every little bit, you know, impacts toward a positive outcome. So I think that I have, you know, I have taught some of the things that have worked for me, and things that I've researched and brought it to other teachers and I think they have actually implemented it.

Said another CF, “Oh, definitely, it has had an effect on classroom practice. Even my own classroom practice, because I scrutinize myself better, too.”

Some CF who are not in the classroom saw the role as another way to stay in touch with classroom teachers. B said that the role helped her keep up to date with the “best practices in the classroom.” S, a school psychologist, said that it helped with his relationships with teachers: “It helps with our reputations. It helps us to be seen as people other than testers or people other than people who attend PPTs.”

Some participants reported that planning for professional development was a beneficial activity, giving them an opportunity to collaborate with their peers: “In our planning conversation, there are coaches and teachers at the table. And oftentimes it's interesting to hear what the coaches believe that teachers need for professional development versus what the classroom teachers feel teachers need.” Said another SF, “I got to work with the math department and really see where they're coming from and what their objectives were. And I think that was the best part for me. I got to meet some of the people there and they accepted our input, which I thought was great.”

Student Support Facilitators

Student Support Facilitators identified many concrete benefits of the role. These include fostering a community and setting up systems to better support students. SSFs talked about fostering a community where communication and collaboration were the norm. One SSF reported, “[I]t’s an important role and it’s one that isn’t thought of in the other realms of PEP - the idea of building community and helping children develop beyond just grades.

Another SSF described how she helped to coordinate efforts to support children:

I think we’re a part of a larger network, I think the fact that we’re able to interface with the SSST, with the SPMT, the fact that you know we pay particular attention to issues around child development make us aware of what some of the other supports are available, but it really, it really is a community of support.

For example, SSF at one school created a new communication document to be used by all the teachers in the school. Similarly, a SSF at another school reported:

At the beginning of the year as a team we created a packet that was to be delivered to the staff. The contents of the packet includes a mission statement, referral process, request form, data collection forms, etc... It differentiates between the special education referral process and the regular education referral process. A teachers’ guide for special education referral, tiered interventions, data collection forms, more data collection forms, and there are just some common strategies for common academic and behavioral concerns.

Another benefit of the SSF role was the way in which it linked teachers to other teachers. One special education teacher described how serving as an SSF increased and strengthened her network within the district:

[T]he thing I like the most about it [the role] is the fact that I kind of get outside of my comfort zone because for the most part being in the largest school in New Haven School District I’m expected to do a lot of assessments. So I’m here cranking out evaluations. You know, IQ, personality assessments, etc., etc. So to be able to be get out there and be more visible, meet other people, not even within the school but in the district and get other ideas is great. And it also gives me the opportunity to work more with the general education population, which I rarely, rarely have an opportunity to do.

Another benefit was the professional development SSF received for their role. One participant stated, “I will say bringing in Yale Child Study to be the leaders on this was brilliant and natural. They have earned, in my mind, a permanent place as the facilitators of this professional development.” Other SSF stated that “the summer training that we did was extremely helpful and really powerful” and “Very uplifting, very collaborative, very engaging.”

To this end, SSF reported that the monthly professional development sessions are very beneficial: “the most growth has been with the SSF meetings that we have monthly and the collaborative process that we have with other high schools. ‘What’s working for you? What are you doing over there? What are you seeing?’ And gathering data and documentation from other schools.”

In addition, the SSF role was helping teachers understand student behaviors through the lens of child development. As one SSF articulated, “There are very few programs like the SSF

where teachers can realize that what's happening around them is normal given the experiences that children have. The TIFF money should be used to help more professionals realize this.”

The work of the SSF also reinforced other efforts in schools to serve and support the whole child. For example, an SSF in one school also writes curriculum for the school's advisory program. She reported that in crafting this curriculum, she drew on the work she had done as an SSF with the Comer model:

I'm responsible for writing the curriculum nine through eleventh grade, so really trying to focus on Comer, The Six Pathways - - making sure that we are helping kids understand that they are more than just a test score or more than just a grade on a report card, helping them develop plans if they aren't doing so well in a class, helping them prepare for their Student Led Conferences.

School leaders with Student Support Facilitators in their schools also largely found those in the role to be beneficial. One principal described the impact of the Student Support Facilitator in terms of the school's Student Staff Support Team (SSST). “[The SSST] has a grade level so the teachers can just, kind of helps organize the structure of it in the building.” This principal reported that the SSST was used to help teachers to shift their classroom practices, stating that the team has been “building capacity while we're working with the teachers on, ‘Okay, it goes back to the room,’ and how strategies can be used to do this.” However, this principal attributed this impact on teacher practice to the SSST, rather than to the Student Support Facilitator role, specifically.

Another principal spoke about how the Student Support Facilitator in the school focused on “this whole mindful way of educating,” in addition to the more procedural work of the SSST. She had begun to create resources for other teachers to use with their students regardless of whether a specific student had received a referral that warranted the attention of SSST members (e.g., the school psychologist).

Network Facilitators

The school leaders we interviewed were enthusiastic about the positive impact of professional development delivered through Network Facilitators (NF), both for those serving in the role itself, as well as the new model for peer learning.

Impact of Professional Development on Network Facilitators' Work in the Role

Principals serving as Network Facilitators participated in monthly professional development sessions with an expert in facilitating meetings, Kerry Lord. Principals serving as Network Facilitators found these sessions to be effective in developing their work and supporting the role. One principal who also has school leadership experience outside of New Haven remarked on the quality of the professional development, even for those with many years of experience. “Going from nothing, from absolutely no professional development to the level of development that I have received [as an NF]— as a building principal has been unbelievable. Like, I wish I had gotten that ten years ago.”

Multiple principals referred to their professional development with Kerry Lord as a community of practice, which they found to provide an authentic, engaging means of developing their professional skills. As one principal stated, “The community of practice that we have with [Kerry], they are, I would say, extremely, extremely beneficial for us. Not just for us in our role

as facilitators, but also in the role we have, our own role as principals.” Several principals also pointed out how useful it was to have space where they were guided in reflective thinking about their own leadership practices. One principal said,

[T]he fact that [Kerry] models, and she helps us reflect on our own role... as a facilitator, is definitely beneficial. I mean, our role is a work in progress, but we’re getting feedback, and we’re getting tools from her every month in how to make this, our facilitator role, better and better each time we meet with our group.

All of the Network Facilitators we interviewed pointed out how helpful it was to have Kerry Lord model strong facilitation practices in these sessions, while providing tools and strategies they could use in their own facilitated meetings with colleagues.

Network Facilitators’ Peer Learning Model

The school leaders we interviewed all agreed that those participating in facilitated groups benefitted from the experience. Several Network Facilitators who had been school leaders for years stated that this was the first time they had been given the opportunity to engage deeply with their colleagues around problems of practice. As one Network Facilitator said, “We have been asking for this kind of stuff for a long time as administrators.”

Many described the information they receive from their peers as being helpful as they worked through issues. Said one principal, “The actual information that we get at the network meetings – the books that are recommended to us, the articles, the protocols – those are some ways that it’s better.” This same principal spoke at length about the value of having dedicated time and space to discuss leadership issues with a network of peers. Another principal spoke about the way facilitated sessions structured constructive dialogue that allowed school leaders to address tensions they might otherwise handle on their own, while also remaining productive.

That’s a great thing about protocols – the permission to have a professional conversation, as opposed to, you know, a gripe session or just an exasperated commiseration... It’s also permission to be a little bit more vulnerable with your colleagues and say, ‘Here is what I’m struggling with,’ and to hear from them similar challenges. And to also hear ideas, hear perspectives that you haven’t brought to the situation. So it has been – it is – really good.

When asked whether his colleagues were engaged in the facilitated sessions, one principal was optimistic that principals were beginning to see this work as more than just another short-lived initiative. “I would say maybe 75% of people are really, truly buying into it. And there’s still that, like, 25% that are, ‘Oh, I’m not sure.’ You know? But I think that the majority are definitely seeing this as a positive way to engage in reflective conversations about their own practice.” Another principal confirmed that, while the shift to peer learning successfully launched, there were still moments when a one-size-fits-all, top-down approach to professional development was enacted, particularly when it is more convenient for central office to manage.

Mentors and Facilitative Coaches

School leaders were positive about their experiences as Mentors and Facilitative Coaches and would like to see this work continue. They noted broad impact on their own practices and specific benefits for those being mentored and coached.

School Leader Perceptions of the Impact of Being a Mentor/Facilitative Coach on their Own Leadership Practice

According to participants in our study, the primary impact of being a Mentor or Facilitative Coach has been a shift in how they conceptualize practices to support and develop educators. Mentors and Facilitative Coaches began their work with a sense that they were charged with sharing solutions with those whom they mentored and coached in order to improve their practice.

The professional development sessions also afforded mentors and facilitative coaches the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences and practices. One facilitative coach described a key aspect of the monthly sessions as "networking, and kind of listening to other opinions and points of view. I think that's been very beneficial for me." Many school leaders in these roles shared their gratitude for time spent with other professionals.

One principal understood the impact she currently has on her teachers in nostalgic terms. As she said, "Had I received this training early on in my career, I think I could have been supporting teachers a lot more. I mean, all along I thought I was supporting them, but now, looking back I'm like, 'Yeah, I could have done a better job.'"

What are the challenges of the role, according to participants?

Teacher Facilitators

According to Teacher Facilitators, the major challenge was lack of administrator support. Additionally, forced participation in facilitator groups led to some teacher resistance at X School. As stated, X administrators provided regular release time and autonomy for the Teacher Facilitator role. Other schools in the district did not grant TFs this support. While TFs in other schools acknowledged the benefit of the role regarding developing networks and ultimately improving teacher practice, they did not feel adequately supported by administration.

Lack of Administrator Support

TFs' main challenged concerned time for their groups to meet. All TFs interviewed reported this as an issue. Because after school activities limited the availability of many teachers, facilitators attempted to use PLC time (Professional Learning Communities) for facilitator group work. However, Teacher Facilitators reported that administrators often required them to work on other issues during this time because such issues, unrelated to teacher development, took precedence. As B stated, "It's like teacher needs come last in the grand scheme of things." As result, facilitators were forced to squeeze meetings into planning periods or lunches, which often limited participation. In some cases, this meant that groups were unable to meet.

According to TFs, by not protecting time for groups to meet, administrators at these schools were not adequately supporting the Teacher Facilitator initiative. The general consensus of the focus group was that administrators did not see the value of peer-led professional development. As J stated during the focus group,

I certainly don't believe my principal actually values the idea that I am a learner and I'm learning as I go and that I am going to make mistakes, but, like, the best way for me to actually learn is through my peers.

B suggested, "They [administrators] don't want to empower teachers today. I think they are a little nervous about empowering teachers". When R added, "They don't trust the teacher",

B continued, “Yeah. They don’t think we are capable of it. I think it’s a capability issue, too. I don’t think they think we could do it.”

Teacher Resistance

In addition to an unsupportive administration, interviews from X suggest that forced participation in facilitator groups may lead to some teacher resistance. This is particularly evident from more experienced staff members according to TFs. Although M had been teaching for eleven years, she described herself as “rookie” in the eyes of her more experienced peers. M believed this is a challenge because:

[W]hen you have a lot of older staff they kind of think they already know how to do everything well, they don't need to change, they're already experts - you know. So that's probably the biggest struggle all of us facilitators have had, some of the older staff... resistant to change and all.

She continued, describing her strategy to combat this obstacle:

I just skip them and we do somebody else’s problem of practice and then I mean they’ll participate when we work on somebody else’s problem and issue and give feedback and stuff, but there’s people here that just think they don’t need to change and they’re perfect. So it’s hard to work on improving all of our teaching when a third of the group thinks they’re perfect and don’t need to improve anything...

This resistance may have been caused by teachers’ perceptions of lack of follow through from the district. K herself was reluctant to volunteer to be Teacher Facilitator. She recalled wondering, “Is this another New Haven thing where they’re going to pretend to do something and they don’t follow through?” She reported deciding to “wait and see how it goes before jumping on board and making that commitment.”

School leaders with teacher facilitators echoed similar perspectives of teacher resistance, and some extended it to justify their own lack of encouragement and support. Many were unclear about how teacher facilitators might fit into the broader plans for the school or cited a lack of systems in place to connect with teacher facilitators while planning improvements or the implementation of other policies.

Super Tutors

Super Tutors identified scheduling and maintaining consistent student attendance, as the main challenges of the role. One teacher indicated that she was frustrated that some of the students whom she felt most needed extra help were unable to attend after school tutor sessions because of family obligations: “Part of the problem with it is that the kids who need it the most often can’t stay because one of the reasons they need it is they’re taking care of their brothers and sisters at home.”

In addition, Super Tutors discussed the importance of snacks for after-school tutoring sessions. For example, one teacher stated, “Just a little bit of sugar and a little bit of starch and that’s enough to give them that little jolt that they need to take in more information.” In other schools, snacks were not consistently delivered. In March, one Super Tutor reported, “I’ve been doing this since September, I’ve received snack twice. These kids are from low-income areas, they don’t have food, and sometimes they don’t like the lunch choices.”

While not a challenge, another ST indicated that she would like to collaborate more with her Super Tutor peers. She suggested that her work would be enhanced “if people got to share more, that are Super Tutors.” She would appreciate, “If some person wanted to do an email loop or something where all grade three teachers can collaborate.”

Curriculum Facilitators

The main challenge most curriculum facilitators mentioned was poor communication from the district. They reported that, as a result of this poor communication, many teachers in the district probably did not know much about the PEP roles.

I still think that there are very many teachers that have no idea about it [the Professional Educators Program and the roles it created], or understand the rules... I know that when we put out the rules, lots of written communication had gone out to teachers about, you know, what our goals were, what PEP was, and so on and so forth. But I still to this day think people are very confused about it.

This poor communication also led to inconsistency in the role itself from department to department, due to a lack of a clear vision:

I would recommend at the beginning of this [PEP] sort of identifying what the long-term goal is and being clear about that. I think what you’re going to find as you interview more and more people is a huge discrepancy between different subject areas, and what kind of work they’re all doing, and sort of their definition of that impact of work, and why they’re doing the work that they’re doing. And so I think that, in other districts, they should be clear on what they want their long-term outcomes to be.

Finally, the poor communication made the role frustrating at times, especially with regards to uncertainty in compensation, as described by one CF:

[T]he district, I think, truthfully, they need to be clearer on how they pay us. I think the paying part is very sketchy... last year we going to be curriculum facilitators and we were told we were going to X amount of dollars on a certain day. That never happened. You know, it was like, okay, well, why not? Oh, we’re going to pay you three weeks from now. We’re going to pay you -- no. This is what you said. This is what you need to do.

Facilitators also brought up that the district-wide nature of the role made it difficult for professional development to always be relevant to the needs of individual teachers and schools:

[T]here are teacher needs and then there are district priorities. And because the role is again sort of organized and supervised at a more district level, some of what we do relates more to what the district needs, rather than what teachers of a certain school and a certain grade level may need. So we have a portfolio of schools here, and there are different teaching approaches because we have magnet schools, so on and so forth. So I wish that the role were more in a way that paid closer attention to more school-based things that teachers might need.

One curriculum facilitator also said that principals were sometimes a challenge to the role, reporting that some teachers were unable to implement practices from professional development because of their principals. She believed this might be a result of the poor communication from the district:

You know, we'll be presenting and they'll be like my principal won't let us do that... So, yeah, it's almost like principals need to go to the same thing and hear the same thing. I mean, I think they do hear it somewhere. But I don't know who is presenting the information to them and I don't know how they're hearing it.

Similar, curriculum facilitators also reported that when coaches and CFs disagreed, the teacher simply had to defer to the coach's decision. "Coaches think they know it all. And, so, and as a teacher, which is silly and it's, you know, you feel like you can't -- well, they're the coach and I'm the teacher."

Student Support Facilitators

Student Support Facilitators reported that the main challenges of the role were insufficient time and dealing with SSSTs that were not functional. Some SSFs reported that district professional development for the role was less helpful than was the Comer professional development.

First, teachers reported that time could be an obstacle. As one teacher said, "[E]ven though it might not seem like it's super time consuming, but just the organizing, the emails, the surveying staff going through that information, participating in events, going to extra meetings, attending SPM team meetings." Specifically, one SSF said, "The data collection can be overbearing. So it's what we have, eight forms we need to fill out before this document even gets to you. So we're working on ways to really refine that and to really cut back on the amount of literature and demands and expectations."

Time demands also limited the extent to which administrators had been involved in the work of the SSF. For example, one SSF reported,

Everyone is stretched very, very thin and there are so many committees and meetings and time to be allocated to different areas that administrative input has been next to nil. We have had an administrator come to our meeting I think twice this year. I think twice, so it has been quite difficult to get support from the administrative team. I mean they are all on board for the program, for who we are and what we do with the Triple ST but as far as them attending meetings and really having the input of them, it has been rare.

Second, in some schools, the challenge of launching the SSF role was compounded with the challenge of shoring up the SSST structure. As one SSF stated, "[I]t's still trying to take hold too. I think that some people still are familiar with this process, with the triple ST, with who we are and what our roles are in that role, in that element" but others were not.

Third, SSF reported some challenges with district administrators' oversight of the SSF role. SSF reported that district administrators' desire to quantify the work done by the SSF made their role more stressful:

Other than the percentage of people who participated it's hard to show with numbers the community changes, the student engagement, the work in Advisory and how it affects

them later in life - - those are things that you can't quantify so there was a lot of stress around that and the district having this data driven thing.

Connected with this, some SSF who were interviewed felt that meetings run by the district were less "meaningful" than those run by Comer representatives, "it makes the meetings less meaningful to me because we're doing repetitive things."

Lastly, getting parents involved was sometimes difficult. "It was a flip of a coin really with parental involvement," said one SSF. Another stated,

I can think of one student in particular where the Aunt, the Grandmother, and the Mother were involved. Other students we couldn't even get ahold of a parent. Contact information wasn't there. Addresses were wrong. Returned mail and in some instances truancy would get involved...

While the projects and specific tasks of the Student Support Facilitators were described as valuable by their school leaders, the three principals we interviewed framed this role as an addition to existing, similar structures – which was not always seen as the best use of additional resources. One principal was blunt in sharing her understanding that her Student Support Facilitator received additional professional development as an individual educator, but was not necessarily vital to making changes within the school. She said, "had she [the SSF] not been in that role, she still would have been part of the [SSST] team anyway...I'm hoping that it's adding another level of expertise in terms of the training that she's receiving through that role." She said that she was uncertain about what the SSF was doing beyond participating in the SST: "But to be honest with you, other than that I do not know what else they do." Although the role had the potential to directly impact students, this principal was not sure that it was being implemented in a manner that maximized support for students.

Consistent with this view, principals were still unclear as to whether this role would have a noticeable impact in their schools. When asked if there were additional leadership roles they would see benefiting their schools, a few principals noted that a hybrid of the Student Support Facilitator, as currently implemented, and the Super Tutor role was more in line with their original vision of what a Student Support Facilitator might accomplish. These principals noted the gap between meeting students' academic support needs beyond the classroom (via Super Tutors) and their needs for behavioral, social, emotional, and other support beyond existing formal referred services (via Student Support Facilitators).

Network Facilitators

Overall, Network Facilitators were positive about their new role and stressed how much they would like the position to continue. Several questioned whether there was sufficient time to really dig into deep learning with peers during the existing meeting time, especially as these school leaders found the peer learning activities more useful than more traditional, standardized, hierarchically-delivered professional development.

Many were also skeptical of the expansion of the role to the Superintendent's Meeting, which Network Facilitators critiqued as shifting their role away from facilitating peer learning to serve as advocates for central office's agenda. These school leaders were worried that assigning NF to facilitate on district-mandated topics could damage the trust and relationships they were working hard to build and leverage through the peer learning model that was originally

implemented. Network Facilitators with this concern were willing to give some benefit of the doubt to central office administrators. For example, one school leader stated,

It does feel - and I'm going to be honest - it does feel like some of it was, you know, 'Let's put it in place and we'll fill in the blanks later.' And so that is a little frustrating. Maybe that's what's happening with the Network Facilitators becoming part of the Superintendent's meeting, too.

However, all Network Facilitators participating in interviews were adamant that a shift away from facilitating peer learning, with peers' problems of practice as the focal point, to a more transactional role focused on conveying district information would be detrimental to their work.

Mentors & Facilitative Coaches

Mentors and Facilitative Coaches identified several barriers related to the logistics of their new roles, particularly as they were rolled out midyear. Most of the Mentors and Coaches cited difficulty in setting time to meet with their school leaders; several did not have a chance to meet with their mentee at all during the 2014-15 school year. Some Mentors and Coaches related this to the need to build relationships and trust before school leaders would be comfortable being vulnerable with colleagues. One Mentor spoke with her colleagues about taking small steps, such as stopping by with a token (e.g., a plant, a tray of cookies) or providing a brief informal visit with only positive affirmations, as one way to start building a relationship before getting to the core of mentoring or coaching. Managing the logistics of this prework to mentoring and coaching was widely described as a challenge.

School leaders serving in these roles also described the need to change their own mindsets as a challenge, though many did not identify it as one until after they had received professional development to work through the challenge. As one school leader stated during a professional development session, "People don't resist change, they resist being changed." Every school leader cited Kerry Lord's support in this area as critical to their ability to enact the new leadership role, and many voiced hope for continued professional development in this area.

Summary

On the whole teachers and administrators holding expanded roles expressed overwhelmingly positive views of these roles. They reported that the roles were valuable, meaningful, and professionally enhancing. Over 90% of teachers (and in several cases, 100%) surveyed reported that these roles were valuable to them. Participants reported that these roles enabled them to learn new strategies to improve their practice and enhance student learning, allowed them to have input in district-wide decisions, increased their professional networks, supported their need for autonomy, increased communication across schools, and provided excellent professional learning opportunities for them. Primary challenges to their work in these roles included lack of support from school and district administrators, teacher resistance, lack of time, and a lack of communication of the vision and expectations of the roles across various levels of the system. Within the roles, balancing individuals' need for autonomy and self-direction with schools' and the district's need for coherence remains an ongoing challenge and opportunity for NHPS.

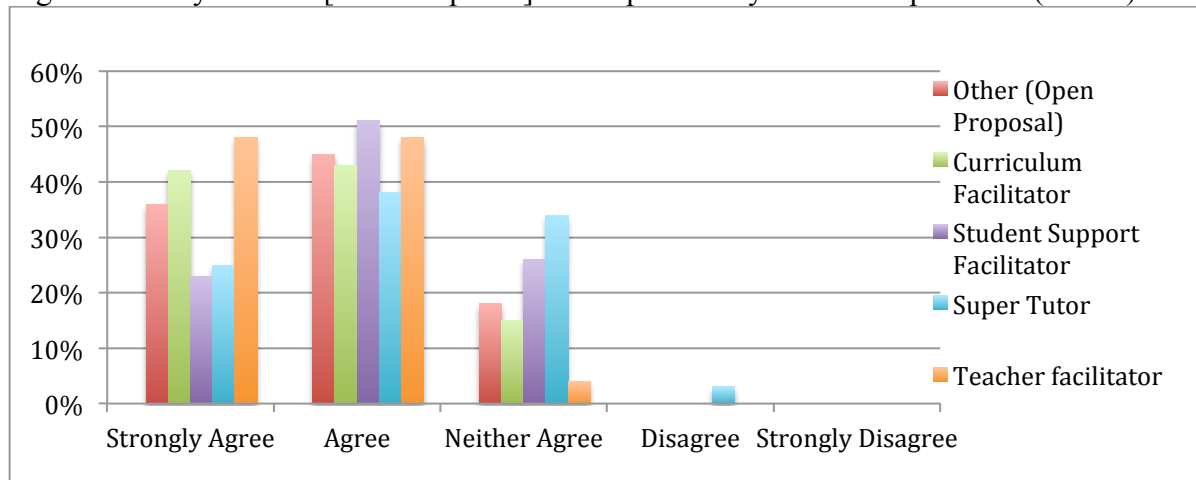
RESEARCH QUESTION 3: DID STUDENT PERFORMANCE IMPROVE AFTER PEP IMPLEMENTATION?

Appendix A includes a discussion of the problems with estimating PEP’s direct causal impact on student achievement. Given these limitations, we report here on participants’ perceptions of impact on their practice and student performance. Echoing the results from 2013-14, teachers holding expanded roles in 2014-15 reported that these roles had a positive effect on their classroom practice, collaboration with colleagues, and student performance. In 2013-14 additional expanded roles were implemented and new roles for administrators were also introduced.

Effects on Educator Practice

As shown in Figure 13, the great majority of teachers surveyed reported that expanded roles improved their practice. Almost all Teacher Facilitators (96%) agreed or strongly agreed that their role improved their teaching. Similarly, 85% of Curriculum Facilitators, 63% of Super Tutors, 74% of Student Support Facilitators, and 81% of Open Proposal respondents reported that their roles had a positive impact on their classroom practice. Significantly, almost no teachers reported that these roles failed to improved their practice.

Figure 13: “My work in [leadership role] has improved my classroom practice” (n=233)



Like teachers, principals and assistant principals were eligible for expanded roles. Administrators who held these roles reported that they had a favorable impact on their practice. For example, 100% of administrators who responded to our year-end survey reported that holding an expanded role improved their work as a leader. Half of administrators surveyed reported that teachers’ expanded roles improved their classroom practice.

Network Facilitators

Network Facilitators reported across the board that this professional development was worth their time away from their schools and improved their practice not only in their role as Network Facilitators, but as leaders in their own buildings. One Network Facilitator’s response captured themes referenced by many of those we interviewed:

Well, I have to say that working with colleagues and having the opportunity to facilitate with them is actually helping me reflect on, ‘Okay, how can I use that with my staff? How can I facilitate with my staff? How can I create a community of practice where my staff feels comfortable expressing their concerns or their excitement about something, you know, without feeling threatened, or feeling not empowered or validated?’ So I think this is definitely helping me reflect on my own way to deal with my staff. Definitely.

Another principal echoed that, “I still feel like I’m learning a lot, but at the same time there are a lot of things that I can not only just do with my small cohort – also practices that I can bring in and use with my faculty-at-large.” Several principals described ways that they have shifted their own practice, particularly around the idea of allowing teachers to arrive at their own solutions, while guiding them in their own reflection and learning. One principal also talked about how she used strategies she learned from the Network Facilitator professional development to move teachers away from prolonged focus on the problem towards consideration of strategies within their control. She reported that this changed not only her leadership practice, but also the extent to which teachers felt empowered within her building.

Another Network Facilitator reported that professional development for this role had focused on “increasing our knowledge base...learning about different protocols that we, can then be used when engaging large groups to make sure that the work is focused. And it has been extremely valuable.” A colleague echoed, “It has been a very risk free, incredibly helpful experience.”

Mentoring/Facilitative Coaches

The Mentors and Facilitative Coaches we interviewed noted a number of small impacts on the leaders they are mentoring and coaching, which add up to improved confidence and more proactive problem solving. One Mentor described the intended shift in educators being mentored:

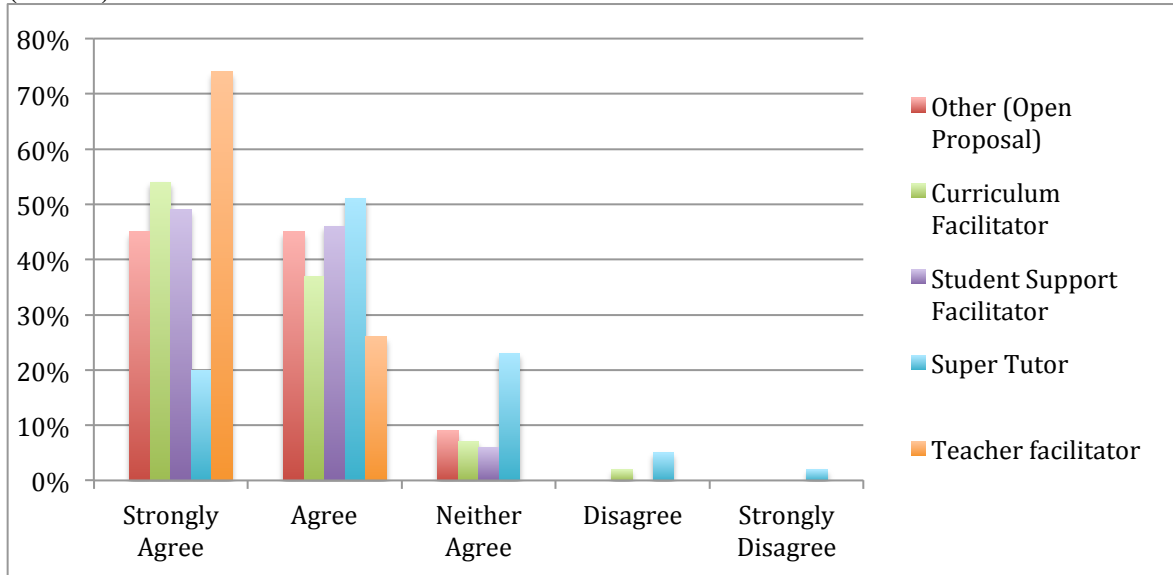
They just have to have the confidence. And know that sometimes the decision they make may not always be the right one so you have to make some right on the fly sometimes but let them decide what the best solution is because otherwise you’re going to create somebody who has no confidence and who is always calling you, ‘What should I do? What should I do?’ ‘Well that works for me but it may not work for you, but you know you wouldn’t be there if they didn’t think you were a good leader. So what do you think should be done?’ You know?

All of the Mentors and Facilitative Coaches participating in the study cited a shift in the confidence of the leaders they were mentoring or coaching. Coaches also described how the role benefited their practice. For example, a coach described the benefit of the experience to her, saying that her conversations with her coaching partner “make me more mindful of whatever I encouraging, exposing, or promoting just to be reflective to make sure that it’s happening here [at her school] as well.”

Effects on Collaboration

Work in expanded roles can also lead to improved collaboration, which in turn can raise student achievement and lead to other positive outcomes for students. We find that the PEP roles improved teachers’ collaboration with other colleagues, as shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14: “My work in [leadership role] has improved my collaboration with colleagues” (n=232)



As shown in Figure 4 above, educators reported that the expanded roles positively affected their collaboration with colleagues. Research demonstrates that collaboration among teachers can have positive effects on student achievement. In fact, skilled teachers with strong ties to colleagues have a greater positive impact on student performance than comparably skilled colleagues without such ties (Pil & Leana, 2013). Thus, efforts to deepen collaborations can improve student performance.

All Teacher Facilitators (100%) reported that this role improved their collaboration with colleagues. Similarly, 91% of Curriculum Facilitators, 90% of Open Proposal teachers, 95% of SSF, and 71% of Super Tutors agreed or strongly agreed that these roles helped them collaborate with other teachers. Similarly, 100% of administrators reported that their work in their expanded roles improved their collaboration with their colleagues. One Network Facilitator described how the new practice of having Network Facilitators facilitate administrator meetings using a structured protocol shifted the way administrators interacted with each other:

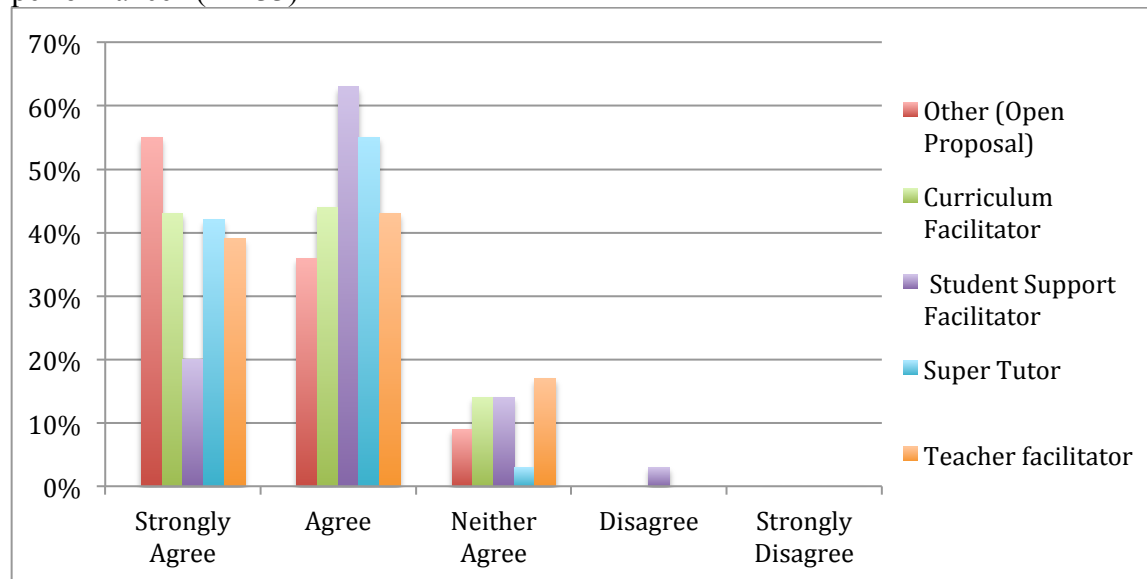
Facilitator groups are great and it's a very refreshing change from typical meetings we have gone to. We have been asking for this kind of stuff for a long time as administrators... the permission to have a professional conversation as opposed to you know a gripe session or just an exasperated commiseration. This is really hard, but to actually push each other to kind of think through things in a pretty prescribed way. It's really good. It's also permission to be a little bit more vulnerable with your colleagues and say, 'Here is what I'm struggling with', and to hear from them similar challenges and to also hear ideas, hear perspectives that you have brought to the situation. So it has been really, it is really good.

Effect on Student Performance

We also asked teachers and principals whether their work in their roles had a positive effect on their students' performance. As with the questions about effects on teachers' practice

and collaboration, educators generally reported that these roles had a positive effect on student outcomes (Figure 15).

Figure 15: “My participation in [leadership role] has had a positive effect on my students’ performance” (n=233)



Educators holding expanded roles reported that these roles improved their students’ performance. Almost all-- 97%-- of Super Tutors agreed or strongly agreed that their work in this role improves student achievement. 91% of teachers holding Open Proposal roles, 87% of Curriculum Facilitators, 83% of SSF, and 82% of Teacher Facilitators reported that their work in their roles had positive effects on student performance.

Teachers offered specific evidence for these effects. For instance, Super Tutors indicated that they observed improved learning outcomes for some of the students who came to them for help during the super tutor sessions. One Super Tutor explained, “Students know that if they don’t get it in class, or if they need more time to work on something, if they don’t anticipate how much time something takes, they can come see me and I’ll be able to help them just as much as I do in class.” Another Super Tutor reported: “[A]t least five kids are passing my class that would not have been passing my class -- I think that’s a pretty good impact.”

Teachers indicated that the Super Tutor sessions bolstered students’ social and academic opportunities. For example, one teacher reported, “I think our work as Super Tutors just impacts the overall student growth and the student opportunities. I really think it helps give our students access to more than just academics.” To this point, teachers talked about building a learning community, encouraging students to help each other solve problems and learn new skills. She summarized, “I like the way the older students are showing them [younger students] ways that they have learned.”

Table 3 includes quotations gathered from open-ended questions on the year-end survey in which teachers report on the impact of their work on student performance.

Table 3: Teachers' Reports of Impact of Their Role on Student Performance

Super Tutors

I discovered social progress as well as academic performance in my students. It was inspiring to see students begin to support one another with homework. This was especially true because my students had homework in Spanish and I do not know that language. Students helped students in Spanish in my Super Tutor group.

I not only reached all my goals but each goal was 30% higher than expected.

As stated above, all tutored students attained mastery or showed substantial growth in all academic areas.

Overall, yes, some students more than others. We just need to keep trying to get students engaged in their successes.

Also, benefitted their social relations with class/family/peers.

Of the students participating - 95% goal, 5% proficient on DSBAC post assessment.

Students learned and wanted to come back each day

Many students showed growth in both reading and math. Students also showed greater interest in learning.

The students were able to transfer what we worked on during sessions to class work.

Currently, I am the only mentor for the robotics team. It takes a lot of time and energy and the students would not be able to compete without a teacher mentor.

This role has given me the opportunity to know students and families better, work with them, improve as an educator, and reflect on the work I do in class and in my Super Tutor time.

Student Support Facilitators

One of the students on my caseload went from a D average to a B.

My impact on student performance has been mostly indirectly as an SSF because I have focused more on building procedures and a few select students that have been referred to SSST.

Curriculum Facilitator

The units that I created were implemented and successful.

As we are delivering new curriculum and ironing out the kinks as well go, I may have had an advantage of advance knowledge of the curriculum.

We have seen an increase in student's reading levels based on the work done around literacy in my role as a curriculum facilitator.

if you can plan it you can teach it

It made me reflect on my lessons to ensure they were engaging and authentic.

My role as a curriculum facilitator has me looking at planning in a new light which affects my classroom and my students performance. I am paying more attention to details, especially in terms of assessment and can monitor growth more efficiently.

I feel that by creating interdisciplinary units and incorporating additional content, I was able to provide my students with extra background knowledge and content vocabulary while keeping them motivated and engaged.

Piloting online tools, improving assessments and learning materials, incorporating more personalized learning and more higher-order-thinking tasks into our programs has proven to enhance student achievement, and feedback from students indicates that the changes are improvements from their perspectives as well.

Yes [my work improves student achievement] because each time I prepare for a CIA I deepen my knowledge of the subjects we prepare for. For example, my work with the CF's helped me develop more effective rubrics, helped me use mentor texts more effectively, helped me develop more effective and engaging performance tasks.

As I mentioned, working with other teachers it has given me the opportunity to expand my instructional knowledge and techniques which I have implemented in my daily teaching. For example, the students have greatly benefited in working in centers focusing on interpretive and interpersonal tasks.

students were more interested in the types of lessons I was teaching and the new resources I used.

The website has made things more organized, especially the access to forms (such as 504 meeting minutes) when necessary.

In conjunction with my role on the state science assessment committee - - I feel that these two roles together have had a positive effect on my students' performance in science this year.

Yes, but the time out of the classroom has hindered some aspects of instruction.

I worked a lot with backward planning this year, and that translated to my planning on the unit level and I was able to better prepare my students for performance tasks.

I am learning more from other curriculum facilitators which I am taking and using in my classroom.

It has helped me see where there are gaps in my students' mastery of new material and to develop strategies to strengthen their skills.

The work that I decided (without requested guidance) should be done and that I did do helped me to guide students much better.

Tests, handouts, etc. have been reworked to be more student-friendly; I've also gotten little bits

and suggest of wisdom back from my colleagues.

I was able to use some ideas on the practices.

I use what I share

My work as curriculum facilitator has been completely independent of my role as teacher in my school; however, the things I am learning as a cf have improved my classroom.

I have enjoyed working with my supervisor. I have learned a lot more about World Language instruction. This experience has reinvigorated my teaching.

School leaders also reported that the expanded roles aided them in their work with students. Two-thirds of administrators surveyed reported that their work in the role had a positive effect on the way they work with students.

Leaders also reported examples describing how teachers' roles supported student learning. For example, principals noted how the extra assistance during Super Tutor sessions helped students on the brink of falling behind to stay on target in their learning goals. As one principal stated, "that little bit of one-on-one work after school really gives them the leg up and helps them achieve." This principal also noted the effect that afterschool work with a Super Tutor had on boosting students' self-esteem, which in turn improved their learning during school hours.

If you have students who are struggling and they get extra attention after school that has an impact on how well they do during the day too, and their attitudes about school...I think it does have an impact on children who want to be here, and they enjoy working with a particular teacher, and they're seeing themselves improve.

Another principal who found the Super Tutors' work to be valuable described how teachers connected the work of Super Tutors directly to their classroom work, which allowed students to benefit from customized, extended hours of support: "[I]f they are your [the Super Tutor's] own students that you have during the day it can really pick up and hone in on what they need and it's not a prescribed program that may not fit the needs of the child but you're being told to use [it]."

Similarly, a principal described the impact of a Student Support Facilitator:

[T]he strategies and the new learning that she's gaining through those trainings, she can tap into those and kind of share that with the rest of my team as you're then looking at different student needs that are coming across their table in terms of requests

Summary

Overall, educators report that the roles created through PEP are, in their view, improving educator practice, collaboration, and student performance. Although respondents identify areas to strengthen in the PEP initiative, they generally report that the roles are valuable to them, their school, and their students.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Haven Public Schools asked a team of researchers at the Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut, to conduct independent research on the implementation of the Professional Educators Program (PEP) in the New Haven Public Schools. Our research was guided by the following questions.

1. *Have NHPS's human capital practices changed relative to before PEP was implemented?*
 - a. *To what degree does educator evaluation affect educators' practice?*
 - b. *To what degree is educator effectiveness considered in human capital decisions?*
 - c. *To what degree have human capital practices provided targeted support to high-need schools?*
2. *How do educators view specific changes to NHPS's human capital practices?*
3. *Did student performance improve after PEP implementation?*

In response to these questions, our research generated findings as follows:

First, teachers and school leaders perceived the Professional Educators Program (PEP) to have changed specific human capital practices in the district during the 2014-15 school year, largely in the areas of professional development, leadership opportunities, and compensation. Other core human capital practices, including evaluation, recruitment, hiring, and dismissal practices, were not reported to have changed in the district as a result of PEP. Educators further reported that they viewed the changes to professional development as the most substantial and the changes to compensation as relatively modest. Teachers and school leaders diverged in their perceptions of changes to expanded roles, with teachers divided on whether the new roles qualified as “teacher leadership” and school leaders excited about the ability to move into new leadership activities through their PEP roles.

Second, teachers tended to report that TEVAL improved their instruction, prompted them to work harder, and affected how they planned and prepared. However, the rate at which teachers agreed with these statements is lower than in 2013-14. The declines in the extent to which teachers report that TEVAL affects their planning and preparation and how hard they work could be interpreted as positive or negative. On the positive side, TEVAL paperwork could be easing. On the negative side, the attention of teachers and administrators could be focused on other matters, thus diluting the effect of TEVAL on these outcomes. Although the percentage of teachers reporting that TEVAL has improved their instruction has declined from 2013-14, it is still above the rates at which teachers reported an impact on their practice early in the evaluation system's existence.

Third, educators reported that educator effectiveness played a role in the selection process for various roles. However, some degree of confusion persists regarding how educator effectiveness factors into the selection and enactment of these roles and the broader PEP initiative.

Fourth, we found that the distribution of teacher roles across tiers is more equitable than in prior years. NHPS has made considerable progress in this regard.

Fifth, teachers and administrators holding expanded roles expressed overwhelmingly positive views of these roles. They reported that the roles were valuable, meaningful, and professionally enhancing. Over 90% (and in several cases, 100%) of teachers in each role reported that their role was valuable to them. Participants reported that these roles enabled them

to learn new strategies to improve their practice and enhance student learning, allowed them to have input in district-wide decisions, increased their professional networks, supported their need for autonomy, increased communication across schools, and provided excellent professional learning opportunities for them. Primary challenges to their work in these roles included lack of support from school and district administrators, teacher resistance, lack of time, and a lack of communication of the vision and expectations of the roles across various levels of the system. Within the roles, balancing individuals' need for autonomy and self-direction with schools' and the district's need for coherence remains an ongoing challenge and opportunity for NHPS.

Sixth, educators reported that the roles created through PEP were, in their view, improving educator practice, collaboration, and student performance. Although respondents identified areas to strengthen in the PEP initiative, they reported that the roles were beneficial to them, their school, and their students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings outlined in the executive summary and detailed in the larger report, we recommend the following:

- 1. Continue to support the expanded roles in New Haven Public Schools.** Almost to a person, the expanded roles created through PEP have been valuable, meaningful, and impactful to teachers and school administrators who have held these roles. Educators reported that professional learning opportunities (largely peer-to-peer) through the roles have been very good and, at times, excellent. They report that the opportunities to broaden and deepen their professional networks and the space in which to collaborate, problem solve, and innovate has improved their practice and, they report, led to better learning opportunities for students.
- 2. Clarify the definitions and expectations of expanded roles for teachers and administrators to all who interact with them.** Specifically, district supervisors, school administrators, coaches, and teachers should know the purpose and duties of each role, how success in each role is defined, how the roles are supported and monitored, and whom to contact if one has questions or concerns. Many of the questions and concerns with the roles as currently implemented related to lack of clarity regarding these aspects of each role. Moreover, clarifying the theory of action for each role and the PEP initiative as a whole would help educators understand what the initiative seeks to do, how it will accomplish these aims and, ultimately, why it is worth investing in as an individual and an organization.
- 3. Consider the balance between role-holders' need for autonomy and self-direction and schools' and the district's need for some degree of coherence.** We know that autonomy is a key piece of individuals' motivation to do their work well. However, schools and district have pressing and specific needs that may not overlap with teachers' individual, professional needs or chosen areas of focus. What is the proper balance between these potentially conflicting needs? This question should be asked at the district level and the school level and among groups in expanded roles. It should also be posed at regular intervals to be sure that individuals are mindful of maximizing the benefits of the roles to educators and students.
- 4. Encourage and communicate full implementation of PEP across all human capital functions.** The vision of PEP is that the human capital functions of the district cohere and center on educator effectiveness. Our data suggest that NHPS has made great strides to reform leaders opportunities for teachers and school leaders, professional development for educators, and, to some degree, compensation. There is less evidence that changes have occurred to recruitment, hiring, evaluation, and dismissal practices. In part, this may be due to the fact that some functions underwent key changes just prior to PEP's implementation. We suggest communicating to all stakeholders the state of changes to each human capital function and plans for the next phase of work in each domain.

- 5. Encourage the integration of PEP with other initiatives.** At both the teacher and school leader level, educators reported that PEP was sometimes seen as independent or even in conflict with other initiatives. The district should consider finding ways to assist principals in making connections across multiple reforms so that the PEP roles link with other work in the school. This may address two concerns raised in the data: that principals felt they did not know exactly what teachers' roles were meant to address and that some teachers in these roles did not consider them "leadership." If principals think proactively about cultivating teacher leadership in their schools, encouraging teachers to apply for roles and then giving them with authority alongside their role-related work, a career lattice or ladder might result. Within schools, principals and teachers might jointly consider questions such as: What does it mean to be building leadership through these teacher leader roles? And how does teacher leadership fit into the existing and future ecology of the school?
- 6. Consider what it means to provide "targeted" support to high-needs schools.** In the coming year, the district should consider what it means in "targeting" support to high-need schools. Does this suggest that teachers in Tiers 2 and 3 should hold a disproportionately larger share of roles than their counterparts in Tier 1? In addition, the district might consider whether certain roles should be held in greater proportions in various Tiers. For example, if Tier 3 schools enroll students with the greatest needs, perhaps more Super Tutor and Student Support Facilitator roles should be allocated to these schools.
- 7. Consider role-specific modifications.** Educators made many excellent suggestions about modifications to roles. For example, some school leaders called for an additional role for teachers that integrates the Student Support Facilitator and Super Tutor roles. This role would allow teachers to take on leadership in areas of emotional and mental wellness of students while also providing direct support to those students. This would, in their view, expand the work of the SSF well beyond the existing SSST structure. Some Curriculum Facilitators called for codifying the amount of work demanded by their role so there was more equity in work load across Curriculum Facilitators. Some Super Tutors asked for more opportunities to share best practices and work on problems of practice with other Super Tutors. Others suggested that district administrators consider selecting teachers with various subject specialties in a given school for the Super Tutor role so as to meet students' diverse needs. Coaches and Mentors asked for more clarity about how the roles differed from each other.

APPENDIX A

Problems With Estimating PEP's Impact on Student Achievement *Morgaen Donaldson and Kimberly LeChasseur, University of Connecticut*

By impact, we mean the causal effect of a program, like PEP, on a desired outcome, like student achievement. To measure impact, we need to be able to isolate whether the program increased student performance (or other outcomes). For example, if a reading intervention is randomly assigned to a group of students, the growth in achievement scores (the difference between post-test and pre-test) of students receiving the treatment can be compared to the growth in achievement scores of students not receiving the treatment (the control group). One key requirement here is that treatment and control groups are randomly assigned; the only difference between members of the treatment and control groups should be the group that they are assigned to. The second key requirement is that no other interventions occur simultaneously. If both these requirements are met, an estimate of the *impact* of the intervention on the key outcome can be calculated. This inference of impact is strengthened if the intervention is very close to the outcome it seeks to change (e.g. a reading intervention seeking to improve students' reading scores as opposed to a change in school scheduling seeking to improve students' reading scores).

It is difficult to isolate the impact of a holistic, broad program like PEP on student achievement for three main reasons.

First, NHPS implemented PEP district-wide. PEP was implemented district-wide and there is thus no control group. In addition, educators were selected for roles in a non-random fashion and the students/educators with whom these role-holders work (e.g. Super Tutors' students, Mentors' mentees) were also selected non-randomly.

Second, NHPS implemented PEP simultaneously with several other initiatives. PEP was implemented alongside several other reforms (e.g. Yale initiative) so any global estimate of growth (or loss) on a particular outcome could not be attributed solely to PEP.

Third, PEP is a holistic intervention at the level of the teacher and school leader. The theory of action suggests that PEP will change adult behaviors, which in turn will improve student performance. Implicit in this theory of action is the assumption that it will take time for adult behaviors to change in ways that are reflected in student performance data. New roles have been in effect for at most two school years, so we might be able to begin to see effects for these particular roles on the students with which those educators work, but broad effects of the program are not likely to be detectable yet. It is also important to keep in mind that adults operate within school settings, which differ from each other and likely influence how individual teachers and school leaders learn and enact these new roles. The PEP "intervention" is in most respects relatively distant from student performance, which allows more chance for context to shape the impact than with an intervention more proximal to student outcomes.

Additionally, the district has shifted to new student assessments, limiting the potential to compare student test scores over long lengths of time. This does not obviate the possibility of estimating impact, it just requires us to think creatively about how we identify valid and reliable

pre- and post-assessments that are aligned to each other and allow us to make sound judgments about impact.

References

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