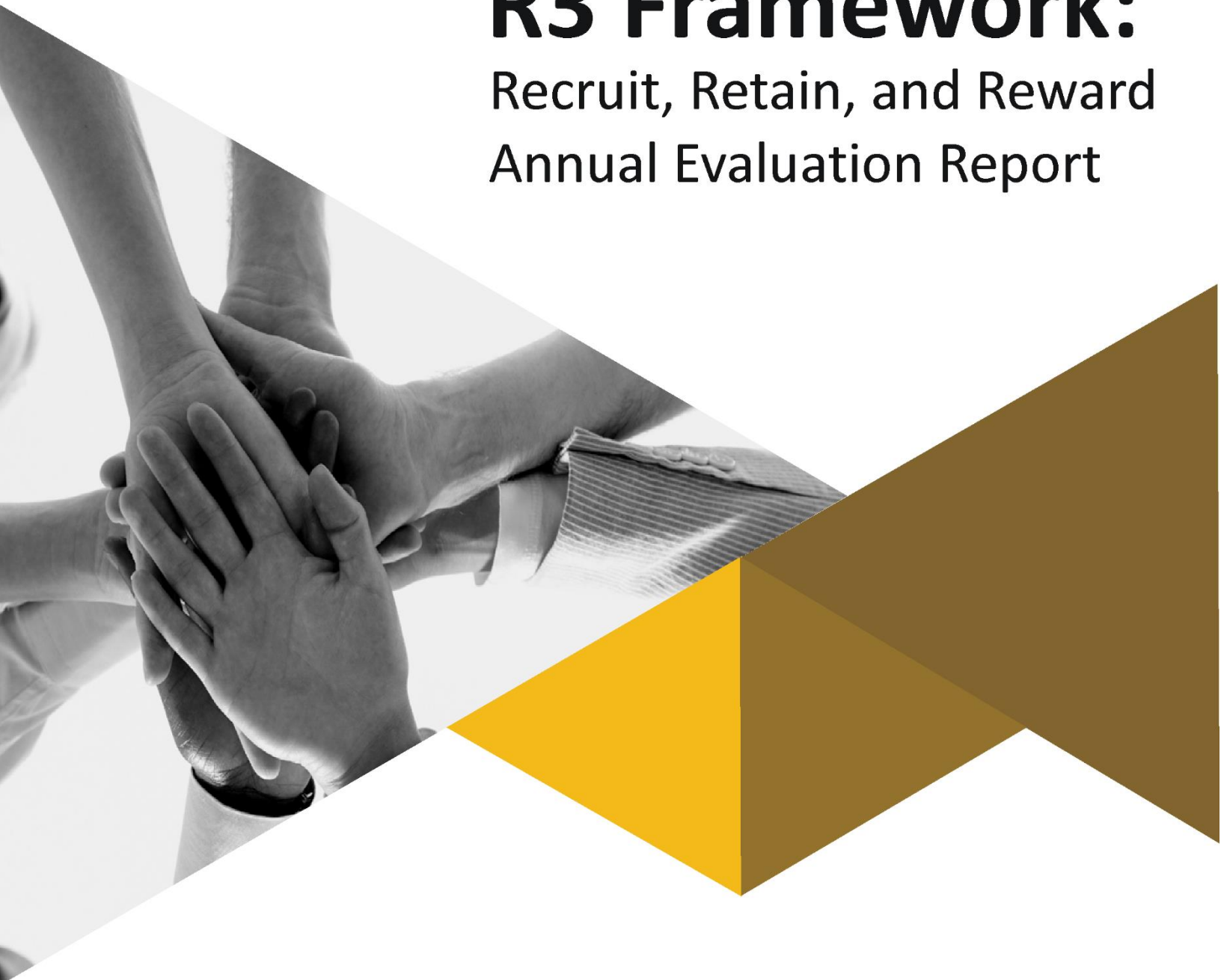


Pitt County Schools

R3 Framework:

Recruit, Retain, and Reward
Annual Evaluation Report



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January 2022

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Introduction

Now, more than ever, districts across the country are struggling with teacher turnover and shortages. Most concerning is the growing number of teachers who are leaving the profession, coupled with an insufficient number entering to replenish the pool. The COVID19 pandemic is a major contributor to the recent exodus; however, the problem surfaced long before the pandemic. Other reasons for the turnover and declining interest in the profession include low pay, stress around high-stakes testing, lack of professional autonomy, and lack of support to teach effectively.¹

Pitt County Schools (PCS), like many districts, has historically struggled to retain teachers. More recently, however, the Department of Excellence, Equity, and Leadership (DEEL) in PCS has successfully implemented an innovative solution with their **R3 Framework: Recruit, Retain, Reward**. This federal- and state-funded initiative recruits qualified teachers to become leaders in their schools while also maintaining full-time status as a classroom teacher. It works to retain teacher leaders by providing advanced professional learning opportunities and ongoing support from DEEL coaches. The teacher leaders are rewarded with both monetary and non-monetary incentives for their additional duties.

Since receiving funds for the R3 Framework, the DEEL office has implemented several Advanced Teacher Roles (ATRs), including the Facilitating Teacher (FT) and the Multi-Classroom Teacher (MCT). FTs are trained to lead a small group of teachers called Collaborating Teachers (CTs) in a Community of Practice (CoP) to address a schoolwide problem of practice. They are compensated at a 15% increase above their base salaries while also maintaining their status as a full-time teacher. MCTs are master teachers who co-teach with 2 to 4 teachers (a.k.a. Co-Teachers or Co-Ts) across multiple classrooms to extend their influence on more students. They are compensated at 30% above base salary. Qualification criteria for both positions include demonstrated impact on student achievement (i.e., EVAAS ratings), teaching expertise, and leadership experience. FTs and MCTs fill their positions for three years and are then required to re-apply.

The 2020-2021 school year marked the fifth and final year of the current grant funding cycle for the R3 Framework.² What should have been the culminating year of implementation was, instead, disrupted by the unforeseen lingering effects of the COVID19 pandemic. After closing schools in the spring of 2020 and not being able to return to full-time in-person instruction in

¹ Berry, B. & Shields, P. *Solving the teacher shortage: Revisiting the lessons we've learned*. (May 2017). Phi Delta Kappan 98 (8), 8-18.

² In August 2021, PCS was approved for a one year no-cost extension from USDOE.

the fall of 2020, ATR leaders performed their duties in a hybrid learning schedule for part of the school year. This involved alternating weeks of remote and in-person instruction, for students who chose to return to school. The alternative option provided was full-time remote instruction. Elementary schools returned to full-time in-person instruction at the beginning of the second semester (i.e., January). Middle and high schools returned to full-time in-person instruction later in the spring.

The current evaluation report on the R3 Framework conducted by Measurement Incorporated focuses on the ways in which FTs and MCTs implemented their roles and responsibilities in a changed learning environment. It also highlights the impact of the ATR positions on teachers' perceptions of leadership. Student outcome data, on the other hand, was excluded from the study this year due to the limited availability of reliable data.

Implementation

The ATR teachers, who had a record of effectiveness in the classroom, were given different opportunities to extend their influence on other teachers and students (see [Box 1](#) for a description of each role’s leadership duties). This section of the report summarizes data on how each role was implemented throughout the year. It begins with an overview of the number of teachers who filled the positions, along with their partner positions.

Number of Teachers in ATRs

[Table 1](#) lists the number of teachers who participated in each position during the 2020-2021 school year. Specifically, there were 74 FTs who collaborated with 225 CTs. While not reported in the table, the number of FTs and CTs was slightly down from the previous school year.

Table 1. Number of Teachers in ATRs in 2020-2021³

	# of teachers
Facilitating Teacher (FT)	74
Collaborating Teacher (CT)	225
Multi-Classroom Teacher (MCT)	15
Co-Teacher (Co-T)	40 ⁴
TOTAL	354

The table also shows that there were 15 MCTs who co-taught with 40 Co-Ts. The number of MCTs remained the same as the previous year while the number of Co-Ts increased.

All told, there were 354 teachers participating in the initiative during the school year, which represents about 24% of the teacher population in the county.

³ Source of data: DEEL spreadsheet

⁴ Six of the Co-Ts only participated in co-planning with the MCT.

Box 1. Advanced Teacher Role Descriptions

Facilitating Teacher

FTs are effective teachers who lead a group of 2 to 4 CTs in a Community of Practice (CoP) to address a problem of practice affecting student outcomes. The CoP completes a collaborative inquiry project that involves a semi-structured process for determining a meaningful focus and a theory of action, and then implementing research-based solutions for the problem of practice. The FT facilitates the team through a process of analyzing data -called a cycle of inquiry (COI)- to identify patterns and themes, and to make conclusions about the impact of the project. The process is iterative and allows for the CoP to refine or expand strategies and solutions. The CoP presents the project and findings to their school. FTs also summarize the projects in a Live Binder—an online platform for sharing projects and resources. The Live Binder is made public to other educators on the DEEL website.

Multi-Classroom Teacher

MCTs are master teachers who co-teach across several classrooms with 2-4 teachers to improve instruction and outcomes for students. They extend their influence by modeling effective instruction and by collaborating with the Co-Ts to plan, instruct, assess, and reflect on teaching and learning.

Facilitating Teacher (FT)

FTs led their CoPs through a collaborative inquiry project. Content areas covered by the projects included

- ▶ ELA
- ▶ Math
- ▶ Social Studies
- ▶ Science/STEM
- ▶ Student engagement
- ▶ English Learners
- ▶ ACT testing
- ▶ Transition (Middle school or High school)

There were four stages to the collaborative inquiry projects which are described below. FTs documented implementation of the stages using a reporting system developed by the DEEL office called the FT Dashboard.⁵

- ▶ **Developing a Wondering-** In this stage, the CoP reviews existing data on the problem of practice to decide on the outcome area they want to improve. They select macro-level data (e.g., BOY assessments) to be collected during their project, along with a potential comparison group. The team completes this stage by the end of August during their first year of the project.
- ▶ **Focusing on Students-** The CoP decides what they want students to know or be able to do because of their project. They formulate the initial driving question and theory of causation as well as the target group of students to be included in the project. This stage is also completed by the end of August and updated annually for the duration of the project.
- ▶ **Focusing on Teacher Learning-** The CoP identifies what they need to do to help students learn, i.e., theory of action. To support their decisions, they review and discuss research articles and collect baseline assessment data on the intervention. The time for completion of this stage is September to October, annually.
- ▶ **Taking Action-** This stage entails implementing the intervention and completing a series (i.e., up to 5) of cycles of inquiry (COI) on the data they collect to monitor progress on outcomes. Conclusions generated by the cycles of inquiry may result in a revision of the driving question. This stage occurs between November and May, annually.

⁵ The FT Dashboard included 64 FTs.

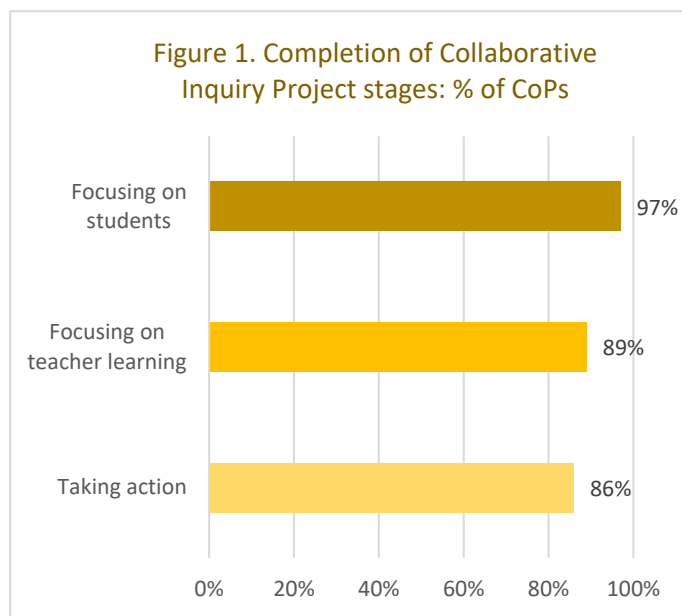
The evaluation assessed fidelity of implementation to the stages by reviewing the dates of completion for each stage of the project. **Figure 1** shows the percentage of FTs and their CoPs that completed the latter three stages.⁶

As seen in the figure, nearly all the CoPs (97%) completed the earlier stage, *focusing on students*. Following, 89% of the CoPs identified interventions or instructional strategies to address the learning goals, i.e., *focusing on teacher learning* stage. Lastly, 86% of the CoPs implemented the interventions and reviewed data to determine their effectiveness, i.e., *taking action* stage.

The lower levels of implementation for the latter stages of the projects can be attributed to challenges CoPs faced in the altered learning environment. Evidence for this assertion comes from a qualitative review of project summaries and artifacts submitted by FTs in their Live Binder⁷

folders. For example, some CoPs struggled to identify and implement instructional strategies that could effectively accommodate both in-person and remote learners. In some cases, the CoPs chose to concentrate on in-person learners because of the challenges they faced trying to engage remote learners in the interventions.

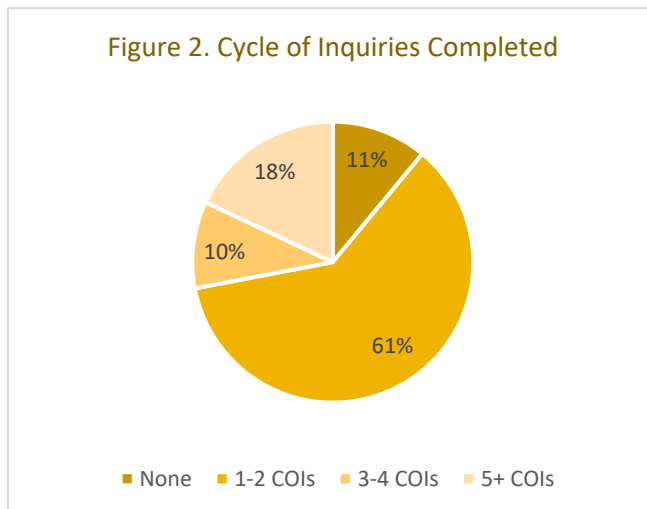
For similar reasons, some FTs reported difficulties administering assessments. For example, students and teachers who were exposed to COVID19 were absent for extended periods of time, which meant fewer assessments could be administered. Students might have also experienced learning loss during their absence, which made it difficult to determine the true impact of the interventions.



⁶ Completion of the first stage was documented in first year of the project.

⁷ FTs documented the collaborative inquiry projects on Live Binder, which are posted on the DEEL website: <https://successforeverychild.com/collaborative-inquiry-projects/>

Consequently, the CoPs conducted fewer Cycles of Inquiry than the typical number, which was five. For example, **Figure 2** shows that 61% of the CoPs conducted only one to two COIs. Another 11% were unable to collect data to complete a COI. Conversely, only 28% of the CoPs were able to conduct three or more COIs. CoPs were better able to conduct multiple COIs when they used teacher-created rubrics or assessments to monitor student progress for in-person learners, according to a review of available assessment data.

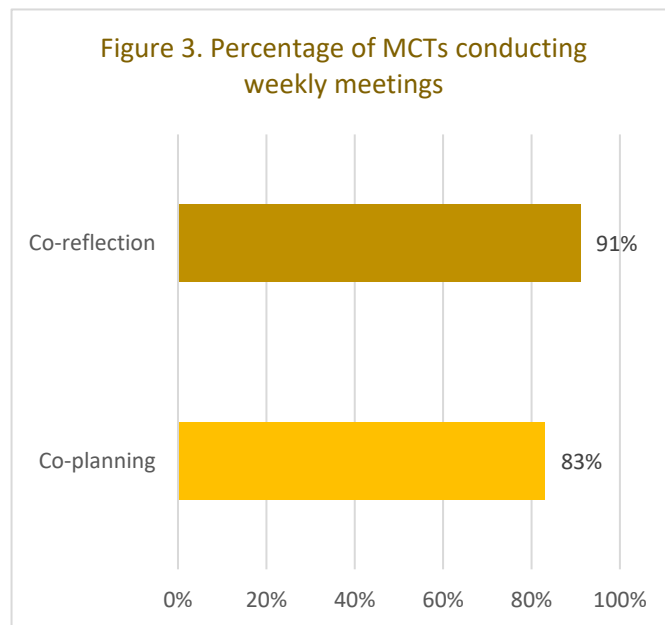


Multi-Classroom Teacher (MCT)

Implementation of the MCT role involved four main duties, which are described below.

- ▶ **Co-planning-** MCTs were expected to schedule weekly planning time with Co-Ts to develop lessons and instruction. Co-planning could be done informally (i.e., via email, Google docs) or formally (i.e., during regularly scheduled planning time) based on researched Co-Planning strategies. Teachers had the flexibility to decide which co-planning format worked best for the team, based on the needs of students and teachers.
- ▶ **Co-instruction-** MCTs and Co-Ts provided instruction daily. There were a variety of ways to co-instruct a class, and the pair selected a specific Co-Instruction approach that best fit the purpose of the lessons and the individual student or group needs.
- ▶ **Co-reflection-** MCTs and Co-Ts were expected to schedule time weekly to discuss the instruction that was provided to students and to reflect on the Co-Ts professional growth goals.
- ▶ **Co-assess-** MCTs collaborated with assigned Co-Ts to: a) design/create appropriate assessments, b) review and interpret assessment data to determine student learning progress, and c) ensure that grades were aligned with assessment data. The frequency of co-assessing varied depending on the need for new assessments and the availability of data.

The evaluation reviewed data from the MCT Weekly Reflection Form that was used by MCTs to document implementation of each activity. Based on this review, the evaluation concluded that most MCTs carried out their duties with the expected frequency. Figure 3, for instance, shows that 83% of MCTs held weekly co-planning meetings and 91% held weekly co-reflection meetings with their Co-Ts.



Anecdotal data from written reflections⁸ by the MCTs suggest that the meetings took on a heightened level of importance because of the need to make rapid changes to accommodate the everchanging class attendance and routines. For example, a common topic of discussion was planning small group instruction in remote and face-to-face settings. Another common topic was supporting Co-Ts' flexibility and positive mindfulness. For instance, MCTs helped their Co-Ts to focus on the positive consequences of the altered learning environments - such as being able to attend to a smaller group of students, rather than the negative aspects - such as lost momentum.

The review of implementation data also found that MCTs used a team-based approach to both planning and instruction more this year, compared to the prior year. For instance, Table 2 shows that 66% of planning time was team-based, meaning that the MCT and Co-T both contributed equally to the plan. This was up from last year when 52% of planning was team-based.⁹

Table 2
Implementation of Co-Planning Strategies

Types of Co-Planning	% of MCTs
Team planning	66%
Co-T lead, MCT assist planning	35%
MCT lead, Co-T assist planning	21%
Partner planning	23%
Parallel planning	9%

Similarly, Table 3 shows that 63% of instruction was team-based, meaning that both teachers were involved in the lesson with no prescribed division of authority. This represents a decrease from the previous year when 72% of instruction was team-based.

⁸ The MCT Weekly Reflection Form included an open-ended item to capture the MCT's reflections for the week.

⁹ See page 7 from [R3 Framework Annual Report-October 2020](#)

Table 3
Implementation of Co-Instruction Strategies

Types of Co-instruction	Description	% of MCTs
Team Teaching	Both teachers are actively involved in the lesson with no prescribed division of authority.	63%
One Teach, One Assist	One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other assists students.	40%
Station Teaching	The co-teaching pair divide the instructional content into parts. Each teacher instructs a group of students that then rotate after a designated period of time.	34%
Alternate/Differentiated	One teacher works with students at grade level while the other teacher works with students who need extended instruction/remediation.	25%
One Teach, One Observe	One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other gathers specific observational information on students or the instructing teacher.	17%
Supplemental Teaching	One teacher works with students at their expected grade level, while the other works with students who need remediation or extended instruction.	19%
Parallel Teaching	Each teacher instructs half of the students in the same instructional material using the same strategy.	17%

Lastly, the implementation data showed that MCTs reduced their frequency of assessment activities this year, compared to last year. More specifically, they implemented co-assessment activities 79% of the time this year, compared to 85% of the time last year. Table 4 shows the types of co-assessment activities and their frequency. For example, 53% of their co-assessment time was spent interpreting data with their Co-Ts, while 43% of time was spent developing and creating assessments. Another third of their time was spent ensuring grade alignment.

Table 4
Implementation of Co-Assess Activities

Co-assess activities	% of MCTs
Interpreting data	53%
Developing/creating assessments	43%
Ensuring grade alignment	33%

In their written reflections, MCTs expressed frustration over using their limited class time to administer assessments but also acknowledged the value of the data as a point of discussion and growth with their Co-Ts. For instance, when they did identify student growth, they discussed the instructional strategies that might have contributed to growth such as increased small group instruction and targeted student groupings. Conversely, when the data did not show growth, they reflected on the impacts of virtual learning, inconsistent student attendance and work completion, to name a few.

Outcomes

Since its inception, Pitt County Schools' R3 Framework has been successful at recruiting and retaining teachers to become leaders in their schools. Equally important, these leaders have had a positive impact on teaching and learning. **Box 2** provides a summary of outcomes from past evaluation reports.

Documentation of outcomes for the recent school year, i.e., 2020-21, however, was hindered in several crucial ways. One, EVAAS and School Report Card data were not available, due to the cancellation of districtwide student testing in the spring of 2020.¹⁰ Two, teachers experienced difficulties administering formative assessments consistently and reliably because of the fluctuating in-person attendance of students. To add, the remote learning environment presented its own set of challenges to assessment, including lack of student engagement and concerns over academic dishonesty, to name a few. For these reasons, student outcomes were not part of the current evaluation.

On the other hand, the evaluation was able to continue data collection on teachers' perceptions of leadership. In prior years, the evaluation used items from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey.¹¹ The items focused on teachers' perceptions of themselves as decision-makers, educational experts, and leaders in their schools. This current evaluation used a survey developed by Hiller (2005)¹² and adapted by the DEEL office that was administered to FTs and CTs.¹³ The FT survey assessed perceptions of leadership before (retroactively) and after the teachers accepted the FT position.¹⁴ The CT survey included similar items, but teachers were only asked to provide their current perceptions of leadership.¹⁵ CTs were also asked to

¹⁰ EVAAS scores were calculated for the spring of 2021 but were not yet available at the time of this report.

¹¹ The survey is administered to teachers in all North Carolina schools every two years.

¹² Hiller, N. (2005). *An examination of leadership beliefs and leadership self-identity: Constructs, correlates, and outcomes* (Unpublished dissertation). Pennsylvania State University.

¹³ MCTs and Co-Ts were not included in this data collection activity.

¹⁴ 78 FTs completed the survey.

¹⁵ 228 CTs completed the survey.

Box 2. Summary of Past Outcomes

Past evaluation reports documented the following positive outcomes of the R3 Framework initiative.

- ▶ **High retention of effective teachers.** 85% of FTs and 87% of MCTs were retained in their positions as of the fall of 2020. The positions were occupied in 33 out of 35 schools in county.
- ▶ **Improved student outcomes.** 57% of CoPs reported positive outcomes from their Collaborative Inquiry Projects in the spring of 2019.
- ▶ **Improved EVAAS scores.** CTs significantly increased their Index Scores after one year of participation in a CoP with their FT. Co-Ts also increased their Index Score from the negative to the positive range of Meets Expected Growth effectiveness level after one year of co-teaching with an MCT.
- ▶ **Improved school report card grades.** 78% of schools received a grade of A, B, or C after one year of implementing teacher leader positions, which was up from 57% the prior year.
- ▶ **Positive perception of teachers as leaders.** Teachers at PCS had more favorable perceptions of teacher leadership opportunities than teachers in comparable North Carolina districts.

report on impacts of the FT leadership. On both surveys, teachers used a 6-point rating scale to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements.¹⁶

Perceptions of Leadership

Starting with FTs, Table 5 lists various statements about leadership and the median response provided by FTs before and after they accepted the position. The statements are organized in three areas: shared leadership, leadership growth, and leadership influence.

Table 5
FT Perceptions of Leadership Before and After Becoming a Leader
Median Response

	Before	After ¹⁷
Shared leadership		
Leadership involves a group collectively making decisions.	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Leadership happens when people collaborate.	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Leadership can be shared.	Agree	Strongly agree
Leaders order other people around.	Somewhat agree	Strongly disagree
Leadership growth		
Skills and abilities for leadership can be developed.	Agree	Strongly agree
Leaders can acquire skills to make them more effective.	Agree	Strongly agree
You're either a leader or you're not.	Somewhat agree	Disagree
One's formal position determines whether they are a leader.	Agree	Disagree
Leadership influence		
Getting "buy-in" from followers is an important leadership task.	Agree	Strongly agree
Leadership involves persuading other people.	Agree	Somewhat agree
The leader should be the most influential person in a group.	Agree	Somewhat disagree
Leadership is about taking charge of a situation.	Agree	Somewhat agree

As seen in the table, FTs significantly changed their perception of leadership over time. The greatest change was in the area of shared leadership. For example, FTs increased their agreement from somewhat agree to strongly agree on the following statements.

- ▶ Leadership involves a group collectively making decisions.
- ▶ Leadership happens when people collaborate.

They also increased their agreement to the highest level, i.e., strongly agree, for the statement, *leadership can be shared*. Conversely, their level of agreement for the statement,

¹⁶ The 6-point scale included the following options: strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

¹⁷ Changes in ratings were statistically significant for all statements.

leaders order other people around decreased significantly from somewhat agree to strongly disagree.

The table shows that FTs also changed their perceptions about who can be a leader and how leaders are developed. For example, after becoming FTs they strongly agreed that the skills and abilities for leadership could be developed in individuals as well as improved in persons in leadership roles. Conversely, they disagreed that a person’s formal position determines whether they are a leader. Prior to becoming an FT, they were likely to agree that one’s position determines leadership.

FTs, however, were most conflicted about a leader’s level of influence. On the one hand, they increased their agreement to the highest level, i.e., strongly agree, on the statement *getting “buy-in” from followers is an important leadership task*. Alternatively, they moved to the undecided range, i.e., somewhat agree or disagree, for the remaining statements about persuasion, influence in a group, and taking charge as a leader.

Switching to CTs, [Table 6](#) provides their current level of agreement with the same general leadership statements that were also rated by FTs. It shows that CTs’ level of agreement with statements about shared leadership and leadership growth mirrored that of the FTs. In other words, they were in strong agreement that leadership is about shared collaboration and decision-making and less about ordering other people around. Moreover, they agreed that leadership can be developed.

Table 6
CTs’ Current Perceptions of Leadership
Median Response

	Median Response
Shared leadership	
Leadership involves a group collectively making decisions.	Strongly agree
Leadership happens when people collaborate.	Strongly agree
Leadership can be shared.	Strongly agree
Leaders order other people around.	Strongly disagree
Leadership growth	
Skills and abilities for leadership can be developed.	Strongly agree
Leaders can acquire skills to make them more effective.	Agree
You’re either a leader or you’re not.	Disagree
Leadership influence	
Getting “buy-in” from followers is an important leadership task.	Strongly agree
Leadership involves persuading other people.	Strongly disagree
The leader should be the most influential person in a group.	Somewhat agree
Leadership is about taking charge of a situation.	Agree

On the other hand, CTs had different perceptions about the influence of leaders, compared to FTs. While they were in strong agreement, like FTs, that getting buy-in was an important leadership task, they strongly disagreed that leadership involved persuading other people. FTs

were undecided on this statement. CTs also agreed that leaders take charge of a situation, whereas FTs were undecided.

Impact of FT leadership on CTs

Based on the previous findings about leadership perceptions, it is not surprising that the impact of the FTs on their CTs was positive. Specifically, **Table 7** shows that their greatest impact was empowering CTs to offer their own opinions and suggestions on topics that were discussed. Equally important, CTs viewed themselves as leaders and believed that other teachers shared this view of them. And while they were slightly undecided about wanting to become an FT, they were exercising their leadership in other ways outside of their CoP, e.g., leading grade level PLCs or serving as a member of the school improvement team.

Table 7
Benefits of FT Leadership to CTs
Median Response

<i>As a result of the leadership of my FT, I...</i>	<i>Median Response</i>
Feel empowered to offer my own opinions and suggestions on topics we discuss	Strongly agree
View myself as a leader	Agree
Feel like others view me as a leader	Agree
Have taking leadership initiative in other settings outside of my CoP	Agree
Have a desire to become an FT in the future	Somewhat agree
Have been challenged to grow professionally	Agree
Have learned specific skills I use regularly with my students	Agree
Have learned specific skills I use regularly with other adults when I collaborate with them	Agree
Have a clearer vision of what the term “teacher leader” means in our district	Agree

Furthermore, CTs agreed that the FT challenged them to grow professionally and learn skills that they use with students and other adults. Previous evaluation reports have documented improvements in the use of data to inform instruction and the use of differentiated and research-based instructional strategies, to name a few.

Finally, CTs agreed that there was a clearer vision of what the term “teacher leader” means in the district.



Conclusion

Research tells us that developing teachers as leaders is beneficial to teaching and learning.¹⁸ Some of the documented benefits to teachers are increased confidence, increased use of data to inform instruction, and greater use of differentiated instruction.¹⁹ Students also benefit from teacher leaders. For example, shared leadership was related to student learning in reading and math.²⁰

Cultivating teachers as leaders often requires changing their understanding of what it means to be a leader. Unfortunately, the hierarchical structure in education often prevents teachers from viewing themselves as leaders.²¹ The findings presented in the current evaluation, however, show that the R3 Framework is redefining leadership in Pitt County Schools. For instance, FTs and CTs demonstrated a clear sense of shared leadership and how leaders are developed. Undoubtedly, their perceptions of shared leadership were influenced by their experiences in the Community of Practice which promotes knowledge sharing, collaboration, and mutual decision-making. Similarly, both groups' perceptions of who can be a leader likely reflect their witnessing of leadership development in the FT. What's more, the CTs felt that they were becoming leaders themselves. For their part, MCTs also displayed strong leadership by helping their co-teaching teams navigate uncharted territory with positive conviction.

What we are seeing in Pitt County Schools is a rising number of teachers who are both changing the way that they teach and who view themselves as active contributors to change in their schools. That many of the teachers succeeded in implementing their work despite the myriad of challenges they faced as a result of the COVID19 pandemic provides further evidence of their growing leadership and dedication to their schools.

¹⁸ Berry, B., Daughtrey, A. and Wieder, A. (2010) Teacher Leadership: Leading the Way to Effective Teaching and Learning. Center for Teaching Quality. Retrieved from the internet on 9/4/2020.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED509719.pdf>

¹⁹ Lowey-Moore, H., Latimer, R.M., & Villate, V.M. (2016). The Essence of Teacher Leadership: A Phenomenological Inquiry of Professional Growth. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership*, 7 (1). Retrieved from the internet on 12/23/2021. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1137503.pdf>

²⁰ Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (2010). Collaborative leadership and school improvement: Understanding the impact on school capacity and student learning. *School Leadership and Management*, 30 (2), 95–110.

²¹ Killion, J., Harrison, C., Colton, A., Bryan, C., Delehant, A., & Cooke, D. (2016). *A systemic approach to elevating teacher leadership*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.



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