Pitt County Schools

R3 Framework: Recruit, Retain, Reward

5-Year Summative Evaluation Report

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MI ◈ **MEASUREMENT**
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I. INTRODUCTION

> *Never before has the need been so great for classroom teachers to become agents of change and position themselves as problem solvers at the school building level. Teachers are uniquely positioned to assume leadership roles on a variety of tasks that could transform schools from more traditional workplaces into professional learning communities.*
> *-Cathy Owens[1]*

Leadership in our nation's schools has become an increasingly complex endeavor. Schools are stretching to meet demands such as providing instruction on a larger range of content areas, while also attending to the social, emotional, and physical needs of a growing diverse student population. These demands have been recently compounded by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a time when school administrators could attend to both the business of managing a school and providing instructional leadership; however, today they simply cannot lead alone.

Researchers have long advocated for schools to use one of their greatest assets, the teacher, to participate as active leaders in helping to meet these demands (Lowery-Moore, Latimer, & Villate, 2016; Barth, 2007). They have documented many positive outcomes of teacher leadership such as higher teacher retention, increased teacher efficacy in school-based decision making, and higher student achievement.[2] This research has demonstrated the value of providing high quality educators with the opportunity to bring their expertise to a larger platform so that they can influence school culture, practice, and growth in their communities. Put by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, "Now more than ever, skilled classroom educators must hone their craft, mentor others and grow professionally — while keeping one foot firmly inside the classroom."[3]

Pitt County Schools (PCS) has been at the forefront of investing in teacher leadership for close to ten years. Beginning in 2013 with several teacher leadership preparation programs[4], *R3 Framework: Recruit, Retain, Reward* eventually grew into a human capital management. The initiative was expanded in 2016 with the support of a combined $21.1 million in state and federal grant monies.[5] The *R3 Framework* was originally conceived as an innovative solution to reducing PCS' teacher turnover rate which was disproportionately affecting the district's high-

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[1] Owens, C. (2008). Leading without leaving the classroom. National Staff Development Council. Vol. 29, No. 3.

[2] 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

[3] https://online.campbellsville.edu/education/teacher-leadership/

[4] Supported by state and local foundation funds including Z. Smith Reynolds, the Wells-Fargo Foundation, the Eddie and Jo Allison Smith Family Foundation, a local charity connected to Grady-White Boards, and the Pitt County Educational Foundation.

[5] PCS received a $16.2 million federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant and a $4.9 million state Teacher Compensation Model grant.

need schools and had exceeded the state average. Since its inception, the *R3 Framework* has been increasingly viewed in the district as a sustainable solution to meeting the myriad needs of its schools and students.

In the fall of 2017, PCS partnered with Measurement Incorporated (MI)—a full-service educational assessment and evaluation company headquartered in Durham, NC—to conduct an external evaluation of the *R3 Framework*. This report represents the final summative evaluation of the initiative under the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant funding cycle (2016-2022), which included a No-Cost Extension (NCE) year granted to PCS because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report is organized into the following five sections.

➢ Overview of the *R3 Framework* – includes a description of the human capital management system and advanced teacher leadership roles that are part of the initiative, including the timeline for implementation of the teacher leadership roles

➢ Evaluation methodology summary – presents the data collection activities and reports that were produced throughout the five-year contract

➢ Summary of implementation findings – key implementation findings are provided on the number of teacher leadership positions filled during the grant period, fidelity of implementation, and the quality and satisfaction of supports provided to teachers

➢ Summary of outcome findings –key findings are provided on the following outcomes-teacher retention, student impact, teacher effectiveness, and teacher leadership.

➢ Conclusions and recommendations – where we provide final statements about the successes of the initiative and recommendations for elevating and sustaining the teacher leadership roles.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE R3 FRAMEWORK

In 2013, Pitt County Schools (PCS) launched its *R3 Framework: Recruit, Retain, Reward* initiative with the support of state and local foundation funds.[6] The initial rollout involved the implementation of several teacher leadership preparation programs including the Teacher Leadership Institute and the Key Beginning Teacher program. The success of these programs led PCS to expand the initiative in 2016 with the support of a combined $21.1 million in state and federal grant monies.[7] The *R3 Framework* is overseen and implemented by the Department of Excellence, Equity, and Leadership (DEEL) in PCS. DEEL provides a bridge between the two departments in the district that develop and support teachers and instruction: the Department of Human Resources and the Department of Educational Programs and Services.

The *R3 Framework* is a human capital management system designed to attract, recognize, and retain educators who have the competencies to lead and support other teachers in improving student outcomes. Its innovation lies in the creation of teacher leadership positions that allow educators to maintain their full-time status as a classroom teacher. Prior to this initiative, leadership advancement in PCS required teachers to leave the classroom to pursue roles in administration, coaching, or other non-administrative positions at the school or district levels. Alternatively, *R3* provides opportunities for eligible teachers to extend their influence by leading and collaborating with colleagues to address instructional problems of practice while also teaching their own students. The goals of the initiative are to build teaching capacity and effectiveness in PCS' high-needs schools and to improve outcomes for students.

R3's approach to teacher recruitment and retention is grounded in a growing body of research demonstrating both a need for, as well as the effectiveness of, teacher leadership positions.[8] Additionally, research has shown that additional compensation in the absence of professional learning opportunities and/or advancement does not translate into long-term improvements in student outcomes.[9] *R3* teacher leadership positions offer both—monetary and non-monetary incentives. Educators progress through the different career pathways *and* participate in intense and advanced professional learning so they can further their professional growth goals.

At the heart of the *R3 Framework* is a Career Pathways Model (CPM) that provides multiple opportunities or "pathways" for advanced teacher roles (ATR). Eligible teachers can "choose [to

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[6] Z. Smith Reynolds, the Wells-Fargo Foundation, the Eddie and Jo Allison Smith Family Foundation, a local charity connected to Grady-White Boards, and the Pitt County Educational Foundation.

[7] PCS received a $16.2 million federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant and a $4.9 million state Teacher Compensation Model grant.

[8] Ingersoll, R.M., Dougherty, P. & Sirinides, P., (2017). School Leadership Counts. Santa Cruz, CA: New Teacher Center.

[9] Fryer, R. (2011). Teacher Incentives and Student Achievement: Evidence from New York City Public Schools. NBER Working Paper No. 16850.

apply for] responsibilities and positions aligned with individual strengths, interests, and school system needs"[10] that will allow them opportunities to have a larger impact on their schools. The CPM offers varying degrees of support and training to ensure the success of teachers in the ATRs and to build sustainable practices.

The Career Pathways Model is depicted in **FIGURE 1**. As seen in the figure, the first two pathways—Beginning Teacher (BT) and Professional Teacher—are points of entry for all teachers, which align with the state teacher licensure and compensation model. Four additional pathways that are part of the *R3 Framework* offer differentiated pay and leadership opportunities on top of the LEA-level performance-based compensation system. These include the Facilitating Teacher, Collaborating Teacher, Multi-classroom Teacher, and Co-Teacher.[11] Additionally, two leadership pipelines are available including the Key BT program and the Teacher's Leadership Institute. Following is a description of each.

FIGURE 1. R3 FRAMEWORK CAREER PATHWAYS MODEL

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[10] Feller, T.R, Jr. & Brown, S.N. (2018) *Expanding the Professional Influence, Capacity, and Compensation of Teacher Leaders in Pitt County Schools.* NCASCD Spring Newsletter 2018.

[11] Co-Teachers do not receive additional compensation: rather, they benefit from the support of an MCT who shares classroom instruction duties with the teacher.

FACILITATING AND COLLABORATING TEACHERS (INITIATED IN 2017)

Facilitating Teachers (FTs) are highly effective teachers, as demonstrated by their positive impact on student achievement and expertise in content, leadership, pedagogy, and/or collaboration. Teachers in the position are compensated with a 15% increase above their base salary. They fill the position for three years and have the option to re-apply. The positions are school based; therefore, the teacher must remain at the school for the three-year period to keep the position. Training and coaching support are provided for FTs.

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.[12] Together they develop and implement a collaborative inquiry project.[13] The collaborative inquiry project is a semi-structured process for determining a meaningful focus for change based on student needs, implementing research-based solutions for the problem of practice, and collecting data on outcomes. **Box 1** lists the content areas that are typically addressed in the projects. The FT facilitates the team through a process of data analysis called a Cycle of Inquiry (CoI). The CoI is an iterative process designed to identify patterns and themes in the data. The CoP draws

Box 1. Typical CoP content areas
• ELA
• Math
• Social studies
• Science/STEM
• Student engagement
• English Learners
• ACT testing
• Transition (MS or HS)

conclusions about the impact of the project and uses the data to refine or expand strategies and solutions. The CoP presents the project and findings to their colleagues at the school. FTs summarize the projects in a Live Binder—an online platform for sharing projects and resources—that is made public to other educators on the DEEL website. FTs also document implementation of the project stages, which are monitored by a district-level coach known as a Career Pathway Specialist (CPS).

CTs are a subset of the FT path. While they do not participate in the same professional learning opportunities as the FT, these teachers benefit from the mentorship of FTs who share information, practices, and educational resources that they obtain through professional learning opportunities. For their part in the CoP, CTs receive an annual supplement of $1,500.

MULTI-CLASSROOM TEACHER AND COLLABORATING TEACHER (INITIATED IN 2018)

Multi-Classroom Teachers (MCTs) are master teachers, as exhibited by both classroom observation and student performance data. Eligible teachers have demonstrated high effectiveness with students and adults. They must also have multiple educational credentials, such as National Board Certification and an additional certification, e.g., an advanced degree in the relevant area or an internal certification through the district. They are compensated at 30%

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[12] The problem of practice is identified by the school administrator, school improvement team, and/or other leaders and is based on a review of school-wide data and trends in student performance.

[13] Most CoPs operated in one school, although a small number had membership from several schools and focused on a content area, such as music or social studies.

above their base salary; and, like FTs, MCTs fill their position for three years and then are required to re-apply. The positions are school based as per request by the School Improvement Team to the District Office. Teachers who fill the position are provided with advanced leadership training and coaching support from the DEEL office.

MCTs teach across multiple classrooms to extend their influence on more students. They co-teach daily with two or more teachers who are referred to as Co-Teachers (Co-Ts). MCTs model good instruction and assist the Co-Ts in fulfilling all duties of a classroom teacher for assigned students; however, they do not have a classroom of their own. They meet weekly with Co-Ts to co-plan and co-reflect on instruction, with a specific emphasis on improving the pedagogical skills of the Co-Ts. MCTs document their activities on a weekly reflection form which is monitored by DEEL office staff.

Co-Ts do not receive additional compensation; however, they benefit from the mentorship and co-teaching duties of the MCTs.

KEY BEGINNING TEACHER (BT) PROGRAM (INITIATED IN 2014)

The Key BT program is designed to support the development of promising Beginning Teachers who show leadership potential, as viewed by peers and/or administrators in their schools.[14] Key BTs participate in the program for one year, during which time they receive specialized training in how to be collaborative leaders and supporters to other BTs.

The Key BT program includes four areas of support: orientation, training, resources, and advocacy. The first three areas support Key BTs in making connections, facilitating meetings, and providing resources to their fellow BTs. The advocacy component is the culminating event when all Key BTs visit North Carolina's General Assembly to discuss with state legislators the key issues impacting education.

TEACHER LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (TLI) (INITIATED IN 2016)

The Teacher Leadership Institute (TLI) is a leadership program that involves two years of intensive professional learning that is focused on building teachers' dispositions as leaders, collaborators, and inquirers. In their second year, teachers complete a Capstone Project that demonstrates their use of one of the foundational leadership strands from the Teacher Leaders Competency Rubric.[15] Upon completion of the Capstone Project, participants graduate from the first two years of the program and are eligible for a $4,800 supplement that is awarded incrementally during years three and four, along with financial and mentoring support to pursue certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

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[14] Potential participants are nominated by peers and administrators and are awarded the position in the spring.
[15] Teacher Leadership Institute,

III. EVALUATION SUMMARY

In the fall of 2017, PCS partnered with Measurement Incorporated (MI) to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the *R3 Framework*. The evaluation featured a robust design that reflects MI's basic approach to conducting evaluation studies, including a comprehensive conceptual framework to guide the evaluation and data collection; multiple data sources to check the validity and reliability of findings; and mixed methods (i.e., quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures) to achieve a balance between breadth and depth of information.

Throughout the five years of the evaluation, MI produced multiple formative and summative reports for Pitt County Schools, all of which are housed on the DEEL website. The formative reports included a series of evaluation briefs, called the *R3 Evaluation Brief.* The briefs primarily focused on implementation activities and were designed to furnish PCS with data to allow for midcourse corrections and improvements to the teacher leadership positions and supports. APPENDIX A contains a compendium of the briefs and weblinks to the reports.

The annual summative reports included a comprehensive set of findings on implementation and outcomes of the *R3 Framework* teacher leadership opportunities, along with conclusions and recommendations for each year of the grant.

TABLES 1 and 2 list the quantitative and qualitative data collection activities for each year of the evaluation.

TABLE 1. ANNUAL QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

	Surveys	Extant data
Year 1 evaluation (2017-18)	• MI Key BT and TLI Survey (n=109) • MI Survey to non-ATR teachers (n=258) • Friday Institute Teacher Surveys (n=184 teachers) • North Carolina Working Conditions Survey (n=35 schools)	• Teacher retention data from PCS Human Resources Department (March 2014 to March 2018)
Year 2 evaluation (2018-19)	• MI FT and CT Survey (n=81 FTs and 134 CTs) • MI MCT and Co-T Survey (n=15 MCTs and 21 Co-Ts) • MI Key BT and TLI Survey (n= 22 Key BTs and 28 TLI participants) • MI Survey to non-ATR teachers (n=153)	• ATR retention data from PCS DEEL office • FT and MCT leadership evaluation rubric data from PCS DEEL office • School report card data from NC website

Year 3 evaluation (2019-20)	• North Carolina Working Conditions Survey (n=35 schools)	• ATR retention data from PCS DEEL office • FT Dashboard (n=86) • MCT Weekly Reflection form (n=15) • EVAAS Index scores from PCS
Year 4 evaluation (2020-21)	• MI Teacher Leader Survey (n=49 FTs and 10 MCTs) • Teacher Leader Survey from DEEL office (n=78 FTs and 228 CTs)	• ATR retention data from PCS DEEL office • FT Dashboard (n=64) • MCT Weekly Reflection form (n=15)
Year 5 evaluation (2021-22)	• Survey was not deployed due to competing survey demands from the district	• ATR retention data from PCS DEEL office • FT Dashboard (n=46) • MCT Weekly Reflection form (n=13) • EVAAS Index scores from PCS

TABLE 2. ANNUAL QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

	Interviews/focus group/observations	Document review
Year 1 evaluation (2017-18)	• 4 site visits with interviews with administrators (n=4) and focus groups with teacher leaders (n=25) • Interviews with FTs (n=9) • Interviews with CPS staff (n=4) • Case studies on 2 FTs and 7 CTs	• Live Binder review (n=51)
Year 2 evaluation (2018-19)	• Case study on 1 MCT and 3 Co-Ts • Interviews (n=8 MCTs, 16 CTs, and 2 principals)	• Live Binder review (n=50)
Year 3 evaluation (2019-20)	• Interviews (n=12 school administrators)	• Live Binder review (n=83)
Year 4 evaluation (2020-21)	• Focus group with CPS staff (n=4) • Focus groups (n=11 FTs and 4 MCTs) • Observations with CPS (n=6)	• Live Binder review (n=57)
Year 5 evaluation (2021-22)	• Interviews with teachers who became teacher leaders (n=4) • Case studies on 2 schools	• Review of 1-page summary of CoP outcomes (n=40)

IV. Summary of Implementation Findings

One of the objectives of the evaluation was to assess the implementation of the Advanced Teacher Roles (ATRs). This component of the evaluation served two purposes: 1) to determine if the ATRs were implemented as designed and 2) to inform continuous improvement efforts so that PCS could maximize implementation and the achievement of intended outcomes. Throughout the five-year study, the evaluation addressed the following questions related to three areas of implementation.

> ➢ Dosage –How many teachers filled the leadership positions and how did that fare with the goals of the grant?

> ➢ Fidelity – Did teachers adhere to the expected activities and timelines outlined for each ATR (i.e., FT and MCT positions)?

> ➢ Quality and satisfaction with support – What were participating teachers' perceptions of the quality of supports they received to implement the positions? To what extent were they satisfied with their roles and the activities?

This section provides a summary of key findings in these areas that were reported during the course of the evaluation. It incorporates additional data that were gathered during the grant's No-Cost Extension year, i.e., 2021-22.

A. Dosage

One of the primary goals of the *R3 Framework* was to grow a cadre of teacher leaders in all schools, but with a particular focus on the county's lowest-performing schools. The DEEL office set targets for the number of positions to be filled during the original grant funding cycle, which are listed in the first column of TABLE 3 (following page). Subsequent columns in the table list the number of teachers in each position from the first school year to the fifth school year of grant implementation, i.e., 2017-18 to 2020-21. The 2016-17 school year was a planning year; therefore, no positions were filled during that time.

The table shows that PCS filled the majority of the ATRs and partner positions by the second implementation year of the grant; however, they were short of meeting their goal numbers in subsequent years. To add, vacant FT positions at the start of the 2020-21 school year were left unfilled because it was the final year of the grant, and the district would not have time to train a new set of teachers.

TABLE 3. ADVANCED TEACHER ROLES AND PARTNER POSITIONS
Number of participating teachers

	Targets	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Facilitating Teacher (FT)	99	54	89	87	74
Collaborating Teacher (CT)	291	181	264	263	225
Multi-Classroom Teacher (MCT)	18	n/a	15	15	15
Co-Teacher (Co-T)	36	n/a	34	35	40
Total	444	235	402	400	354

Source of data: Master DEEL Retention database

According to DEEL staff, the district did not have enough qualified candidates to fill the FT and MCT positions during the original grant period, which by default resulted in fewer CT and Co-T positions. Nevertheless, the district's pipeline programs, such as Key BT and TLI, as well as the district's focus on increasing the number of National Board-certified teachers were put into place to increase the number of qualified candidates in the long-term.

During the NCE year, the district re-assessed the number of FT and MCT positions that were needed in schools. **TABLE 4** shows the new minimum targets for the year 2026 and the number filled in 2021-22.

TABLE 4. NCE ADVANCED TEACHER ROLES AND PARTNER POSITIONS
Number of participating teachers

	2026 Targets	2021-22
Facilitating Teacher (FT)	75	52
Collaborating Teacher (CT)	Up to 4 per FT	175
Multi-Classroom Teacher (MCT)	10	13
Co-Teacher (Co-T)	20	33
Total	>255[16]	273

Source of data: Master DEEL Retention database

The table shows that the district was able to fill 68% of the FT positions, which resulted in approximately 3 CTs in each CoP. The district was also able to fill 13 slots for the MCT position, which exceeded the minimum. Each MCT had at least 2 Co-Ts.

Equally important, most teachers who filled the positions during the original grant period and the NCE year taught at one of the 29 high-need schools in the county. More specifically, the left side of **FIGURE 2** on the following page shows that between 76% and 86% of teachers who filled

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[16] The 180 is based on at least 2 CT per FT.

an ATR position taught in a high-need school from 2017 to 2022. In other words, 86% of all teachers in an ATR for the most recent school year (i.e., 2021-22), taught in a high-need school.

FIGURE 2. ATRS IN HIGH-NEED SCHOOLS
Percentage of Teachers and Schools
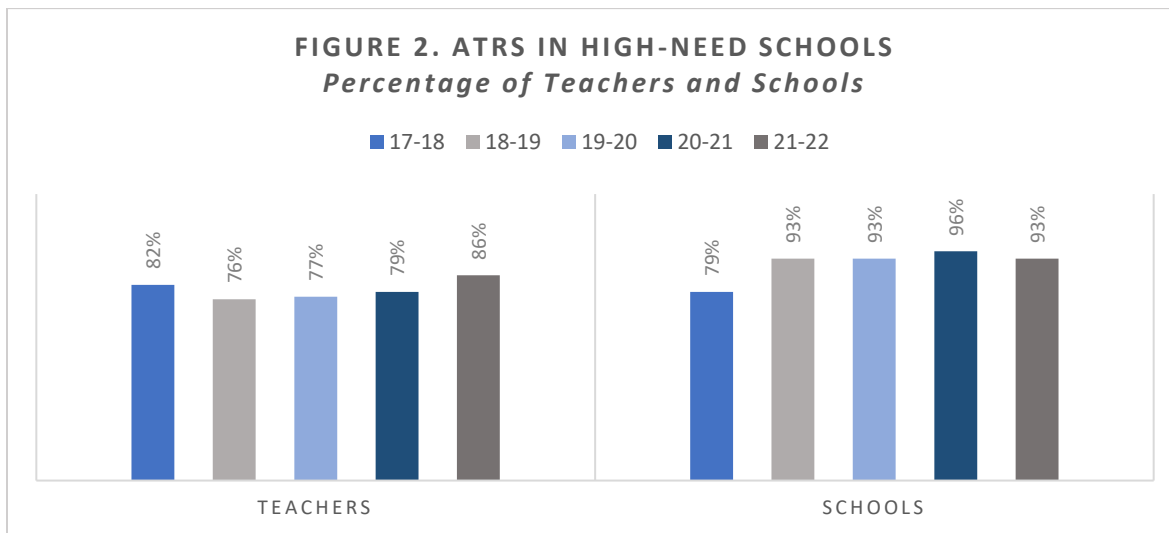
Source of data: Master DEEL Retention database

Put differently, the right side of **FIGURE 2** shows that between 93-96% of the high-need schools had at least one ATR teacher in the school after the first year of the initiative.

Also noteworthy, **FIGURE 3** shows that 48%[17] of all teachers in PCS have participated in one of the four roles since the first year of grant implementation. Not showing in the figure but worth noting is that 6%[18] of the teachers who started in the position of CT or Co-T eventually moved up to the position of FT or MCT.

FIGURE 3. % OF PCS TEACHER POPULATION IN AT LEAST ONE *R3* POSITION

48%

■ Yes ■ No
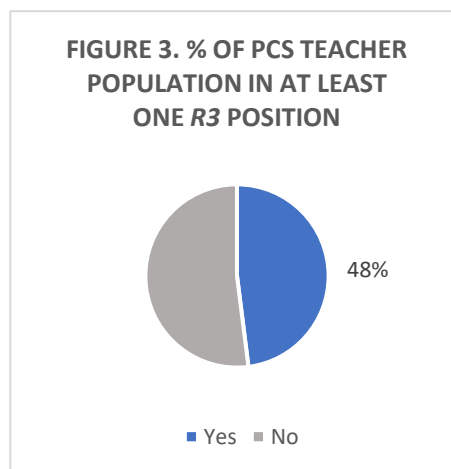
B. FIDELITY

FACILITATING TEACHER

Over the course of the evaluation, fidelity to the FT position was assessed by reviewing the stages of the collaborative inquiry project to ensure that all stages were completed in their expected timeframe. **FIGURE 4** shows the percentage of FTs that completed each of the stages on an annual basis from 2018-19 to 2021-22.[19] A brief description of the stages is provided in the box to the right of the figure along with the expected timeline for completion for each stage.

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[17] 752 out of 1,563 teachers (based on 2021-22 teacher population)
[18] 36 out of 559 CT/Co-Ts
[19] The DEEL office did not establish timelines for each stage until the second year of grant implementation; therefore, data are missing for the 2017-18 school year.

FIGURE 4. COMPLETION OF COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY STAGES
% OF FTS

Legend: Developing a Wondering | Focusing on Students | Focusing on Teacher Learning | Taking Action

2018-19: 100%, 100%, 100%, 92%
2019-20: 100%, 100%, 93%, 90%
2020-21: 100%, 97%, 89%, 86%
2021-22: 74%, 72%, 72%, 61%

Source: DEEL database, FT Roadmap
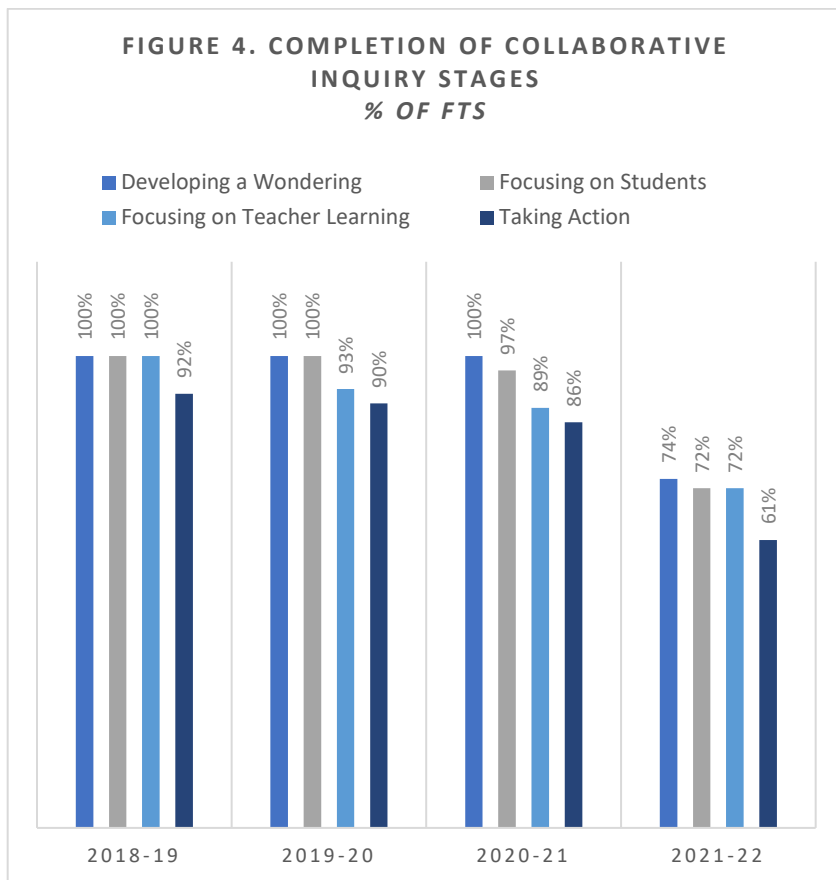
STAGES OF COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY PROJECT

- Developing a wondering – review data on problem of practice by end of August
- Focusing on students – formulate driving question and theory of causation by end of August
- Focusing on teacher learning – develop a theory of action with intervention strategy by end of October
- Taking action – implement intervention and complete Cycles of Inquiry (COI) on data from February to May
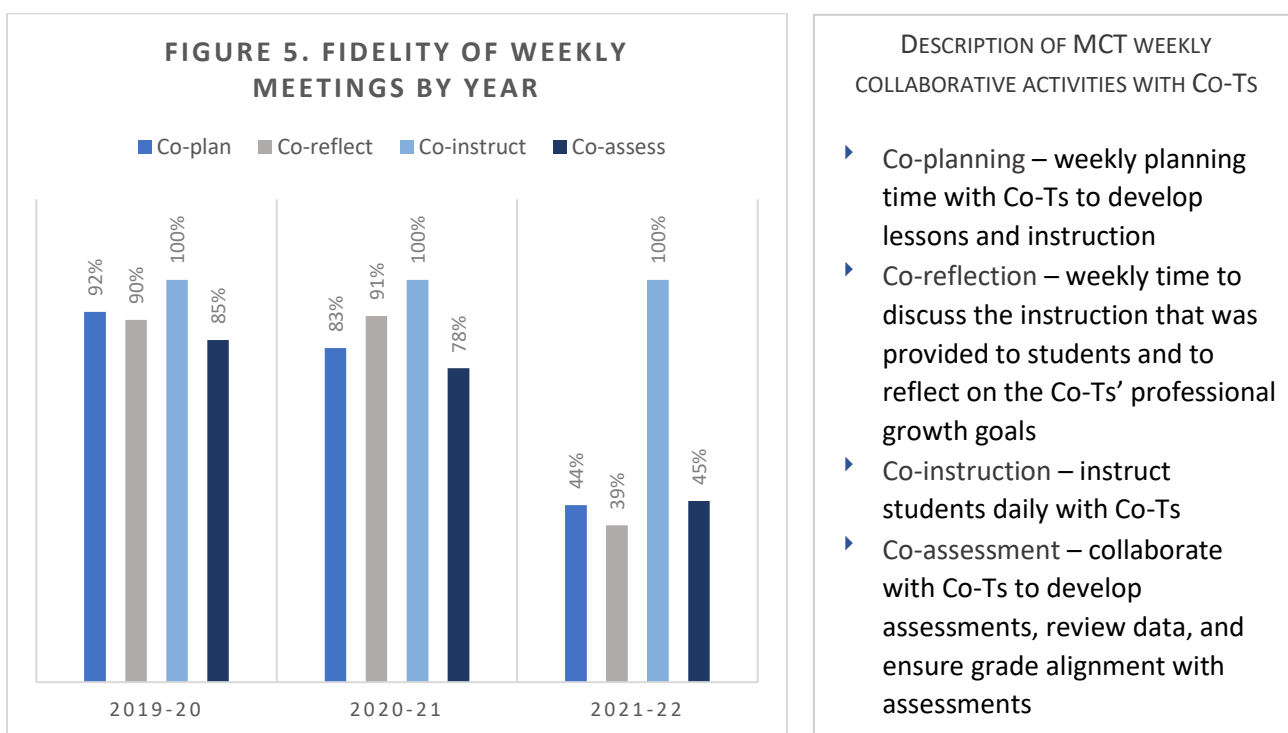
The figure shows high fidelity to the timelines of each stage across years two through four of the original grant funding cycle. For instance, 90% or more of FTs and their CoPs completed all four stages of the projects on time in years two (2018-19) and three (2019-20). There was a slight decrease in the latter three stages of the 2020-21 school year, which can be attributed to challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as remote instruction, extended absences, fewer assessments, etc.

During the NCE year, however, there was a larger decrease in their adherence to timelines for all four stages. Specifically, 72% to 74% of FTs met the timelines for completion of the first three stages and 61% met the timeline for the last stage. The percentages increase when factoring in FTs who were late but completed each of the four stages: 82%, 80%, 76% and 63%, respectively. Further examination into the data revealed that new FTs were more likely to miss deadlines than veteran teachers.

For the MCT position, the evaluation assessed implementation of their expected duties, including weekly co-planning, co-reflection, and co-assessment meetings, as well as daily co-instruction with their designated Co-Ts.

FIGURE 5 summarizes data on weekly implementation of MCT duties from 2019 to 2022.[20] The figure shows high fidelity of implementation for most activities during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years. For instance, all MCTs (100%) instructed students with their Co-Ts. Eighty-five percent or more of the MCTs also implemented weekly co-planning, co-reflection, and co-assessment meetings in 2020. Implementation of co-planning and co-assessment meetings decreased slightly in 2021 but is likely attributed the COVID-19 pandemic mitigation efforts that limited in-person classroom instruction, as indicated in their written reflections.

FIGURE 5. FIDELITY OF WEEKLY MEETINGS BY YEAR

■ Co-plan ■ Co-reflect ■ Co-instruct ■ Co-assess

DESCRIPTION OF MCT WEEKLY COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES WITH CO-TS

▸ Co-planning – weekly planning time with Co-Ts to develop lessons and instruction
▸ Co-reflection – weekly time to discuss the instruction that was provided to students and to reflect on the Co-Ts' professional growth goals
▸ Co-instruction – instruct students daily with Co-Ts
▸ Co-assessment – collaborate with Co-Ts to develop assessments, review data, and ensure grade alignment with assessments

Source: MCT Weekly Reflection Forms

The latest school year, however, showed a sharp decline in weekly co-planning, co-assessment, and co-reflection meetings. In all three areas, less than 50% of the MCTs conducted weekly meetings. The only area where fidelity was maintained by all MCTs was the weekly co-instruction.

A review of the open-ended notes provided by the MCTs coupled with an informal interview with one of the Career Pathway Specialists revealed several factors that could explain the

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[20] Fidelity data was not collected during the first year of the position.

decreased fidelity. They included teacher shortages, re-prioritization of needs, and changes in the format of meetings that were not captured in the weekly reflection form.

First, teacher shortages were prevalent throughout the school year for various reasons which made it difficult for the co-teaching teams to coalesce for meetings. In the words of one MCT, "For the past two weeks, I have had two Co-Ts out of work…I have been covering one of the classes and trying to teach a substitute how to teach the lesson to the other class."

Another MCT wrote, "I am navigating the challenges of having all three Co-T's out at one time and for extended periods while trying to make sure sub plans are complete (plans that were not left by the teachers) and trying to ensure report cards were completed (and also keeping my boundaries that I will not do them). Several challenges have come up these past two weeks that have interrupted our schedule."

Teacher shortages were not limited to teachers in the co-teaching team but also included teachers in other classrooms. This caused administrators to utilize MCTs as back-up teachers in classes that might have existed outside of the co-teaching team. One MCT wrote, "We were short-staffed this week, so I was doing a lot of coverage on Monday and Tuesday and was out for the rest of the week, sick. So far, the beginning of the year has been difficult because of the quarantines and amount of staff having to be out."

Second, challenges in the classroom and emotional fatigue experienced by teachers required MCTs to re-prioritize their support. For example, one MCT wrote, "This week has gone by quickly. Behaviors in the school have escalated before spring break and teachers are worn out…I have offered support for my Co-Teachers and other members in my school during their time of need." The result was more time spent on crisis management and emotional support and less on intentional planning and reflection.

Lastly, the rapidly changing and unpredictable events during the school year forced MCTs to think differently about how they could maintain some semblance of collaboration with planning, assessment, and reflection with their Co-Ts. What evolved, according to the interview with the CPS, was a new form of informal planning and reflections, which she defined as "huddle-ups" or in-the-moment planning. "The mere fact that teachers didn't know who was going to be at school on any given day required everyone to be nimble and quick-thinking." This newer type of informal collaboration wasn't captured in the currently existing MCT reflection form, which resulted in a mistaken impression of a complete absence of collaboration. "But," she went on to say, "in fact there was a lot of small, responsive collaboration going on throughout the day, and it really is a testament to the resilience and dedication of the MCTs in wanting to support their Co-Ts in the ways that they could."

C. QUALITY AND SATISFACTION WITH SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Throughout the grant period, teachers were provided various supports for their participation in the teacher leadership positions. For instance, the DEEL office offered a series of advanced professional learning opportunities that were specific to the responsibilities of the positions. Course topics for the FT position included, but were not limited to, facilitating teams, leading

adults, understanding group dynamics, and interpreting and analyzing data. Course topics for the MCT position included general leadership development, co-teaching and co-planning strategies, and mentoring adults.

Additionally, FTs and MCTs received ongoing coaching from four designated district persons known as a Career Pathway Specialists (CPS). The CPS provided one-on-one coaching, modeling, feedback, and observations—all of which involved differentiated support tailored to the needs of the individual teacher leaders. The CPS staff also provided various resources, materials, and protocols to facilitate implementation of ATR duties. All CPS staff were experienced coaches, having previously served in the role of Instructional Coach in the district. They, too, participated in advanced training in adult mentoring, teacher leadership, and data-driven practices.

Support at the school level was less prescribed and therefore varied compared to support from DEEL. For example, school administrators were encouraged to provide ongoing input, feedback, and data to the ATRs and their teams. They were also expected to provide weekly planning time to MCTs and Co-Ts during the school day and opportunities for FTs and CTs to share the work of the CoP with other teachers during staff meetings. Lastly, they were expected to evaluate the leadership performance of the FTs and MCTs. Outside of these expectations, schools had flexibility in providing additional supports.

Throughout the evaluation, feedback and perception data were collected and provided to the DEEL office formally via the *R3 Framework Evaluation Briefs* and annual evaluation reports, as well as informally at quarterly Grant Leadership Team (GLT) meetings. The data were consistently positive and favorable regarding the quality and satisfaction of supports provided by DEEL and more varied at the school level. For instance, teachers were overwhelmingly satisfied with the training opportunities, including the amount, consistency, and quality of trainings provided, such as Adaptive Schools Training and Data Driven Dialogue. Findings regarding satisfaction with the training can be found in the year two annual report as well as in the January 2018 and February 2019 *R3 Framework Evaluation Briefs*.

In the spring of 2022, interviews conducted with a sample of FTs and MCTs demonstrated their continued high level of satisfaction with the professional learning opportunities. Specifically, 70% of the teachers cited the training as one of the most valuable aspects of their experience as an ATR. Below are two quotes from teachers reflecting on their experiences with the trainings.

> "In my 20 years of professional development, this was by far the best experience and what I used most. It was transformative."

> "The training I received trickled into all areas of my professional world."

Equally important, the teachers in ATR roles expressed gratitude and satisfaction with the support that was provided by the CPS staff. This feedback is well documented in several recent 2021 *R3 Framework Evaluation Briefs*.

V. SUMMARY OF OUTCOME FINDINGS

The *R3 Framework* asserts that providing a Career Pathways Model with teacher leadership opportunities will positively impact teachers and students in a variety of ways. This section of the report summarizes key findings on four outcome areas identified as targets of the initiative. They are bulleted below along with key questions that were addressed by the evaluation.

▸ Teacher retention outcomes: Did the ATRs help to retain effective teachers in PCS classrooms?

▸ CoP student outcomes: Did the collaborative inquiry projects led by FTs have a positive impact on student outcomes?

▸ Teacher effectiveness outcomes: Did the ATR positions have a positive influence on teachers in the partner positions (i.e., Collaborating Teachers and Co-Teachers)?

▸ Teacher leadership outcomes: What improvements in teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership have resulted from the ATRs?

A. TEACHER RETENTION

In response to the first question about retaining effective teachers in PCS classrooms, the evaluation found that most teachers remained in their ATR position during the original grant funding cycle.


FIGURE 6. TEACHER RETENTION IN ATR POSITIONS
% of teachers retained each year

Source: Master DEEL retention database
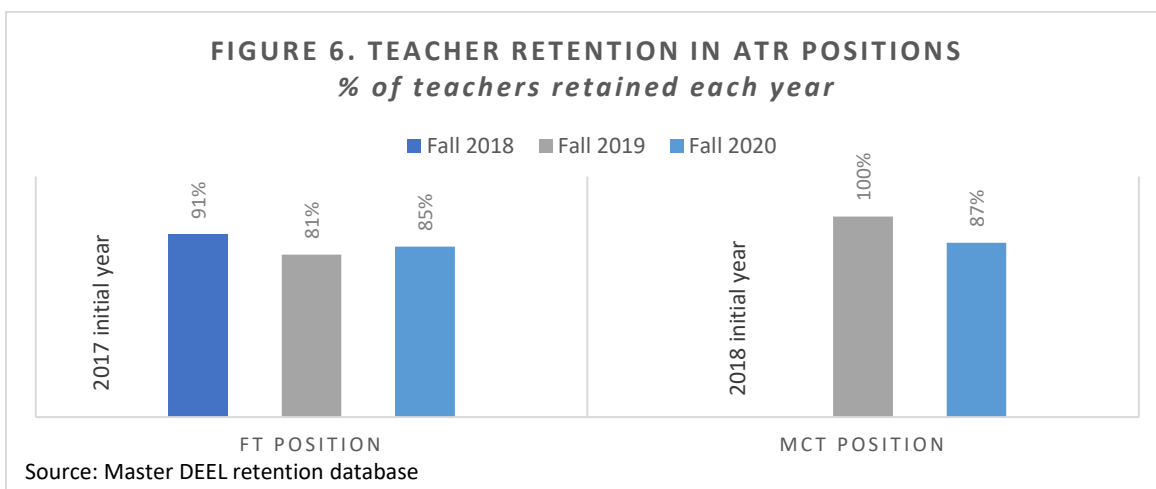
As seen **FIGURE 6**, the annual retention rate for the FT position ranged from 81% to 91% (left side of the figure). The annual retention rate for the MCT position ranged from 87% to 100% (right side of the figure).

B.   CoP STUDENT OUTCOMES

FIGURE 7 summarizes the impact of the collaborative inquiry projects on student outcomes. For the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years, the data involved a qualitative review of Live Binders that are submitted by FTs. Live Binders are online folders that are shared with other teachers in PCS. On the other hand, the more recent school year (i.e.,2021-22), FTs switched to a 1-page summary. Also note that data are missing for the 2020-21 school year because of school closings from the COVID-19 pandemic.

FIGURE 7. CoP IMPACT ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

Source: LiveBinders (n=83), 1-pager (n=40)

The figure shows that over half of FTs reported positive student outcomes in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years, 53% and 57% respectively. In 2021-22, the percentage of FTs who reported positive student outcomes increased to 90%.
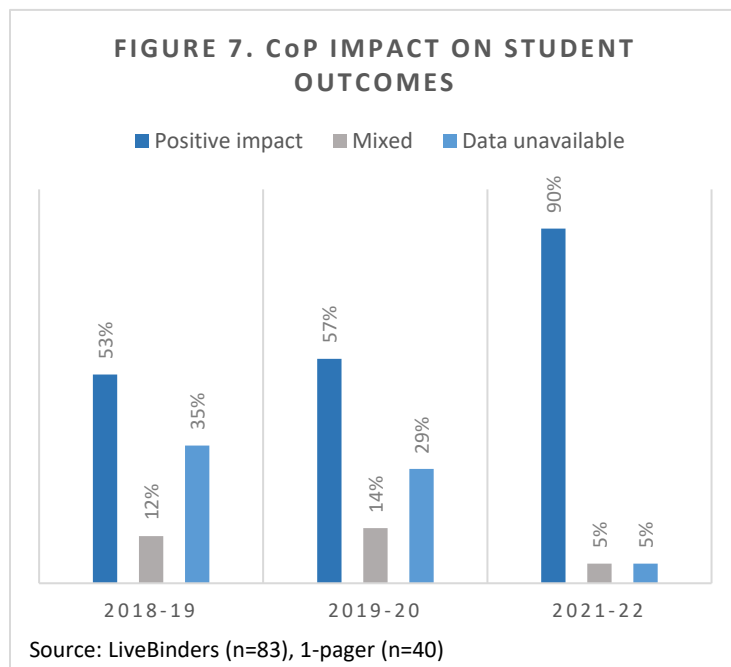
It is difficult to determine if the data for the 2021-22 school year represents a true increase in positive outcomes when compared to the prior years. There are several plausible alternate explanations for the increase. One, the reporting format changed from Live Binder to a one-page summary. When using Live Binder, FTs were more likely to provide raw data - rather than a summary - which allowed the evaluator to make an objective determination of impact. Alternatively, the 1-page summary includes a summary of impact provided by the FT. Two, final summative data was missing in prior years, which may have resulted in the under-reporting of positive outcomes.

C.   TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS OUTCOMES

To determine the impact of the ATR positions on teacher effectiveness, the evaluation used North Carolina's model for measuring student growth, Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).[21] The *2020 Annual R3 Framework Evaluation* report found that CT and Co-T teachers outperformed comparison groups that included teachers who had not participated in any position under the *R3 Framework*. More specifically, CT teachers had higher 2019 EVAAS index scores relative to the comparison group, by a statistically significant amount. To add, Co-T

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[21]   More on EVAAS can be found at the DPI's website.
https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/district-human-capital/evaas

teachers made statistically significant gains on their index score, which put them in the positive range on the *meets expected growth* level.

To set the context for the analyses in the current study, it is important to acknowledge several caveats regarding the 2021 EVAAS outcome data.[22] One, most student assessments used to calculate EVAAS scores were not administered in the 2019-20 school year when schools were closed in the spring because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Two, while student assessments were administered during the 2020-21 school year, the sample sizes were smaller because of extended student absences. Three, student learning conditions varied more than usual over the past two years.

For these reasons, the evaluation could not make conclusive statements about the impact of the ATRs on teacher effectiveness. Nevertheless, we performed several analyses to assess differences in 2021 EVAAS growth indicator levels and EVAAS index scores between teachers who participated in the CT and Co-T positions[23] and teachers who did not participate in any position during the implementation of the *R3 Framework.*

EVAAS growth indicator levels are based on a range of index scores set by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The levels include
- Does not meet expected growth (index scores of less than -2),
- Meets expected growth (index score that is between -2 and 2), and
- Exceeds expected growth (index scores that is 2 or greater).

FIGURE 8 shows the percentage of teachers in the CT, Co-T, and non-participating groups at each of the three levels in 2021.

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[22] [Understanding EVAAS growth reports in 2021](#)
[23] The CT and Co-T groups included teachers who participated in these roles any year from the inception of the positions. Comparison groups included teachers who did not participate in any position (i.e., FT, CT, MCT, and Co-T) since their inception.

FIGURE 8. GROWTH INDICATOR LEVELS
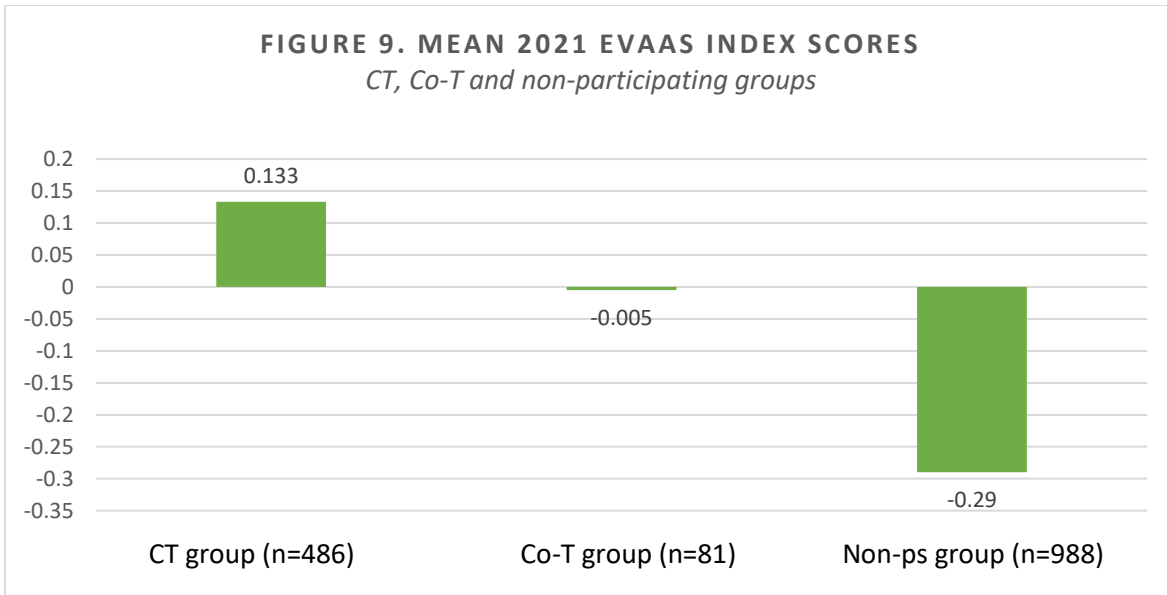*% of CT, Co-T, and non-participating teachers*
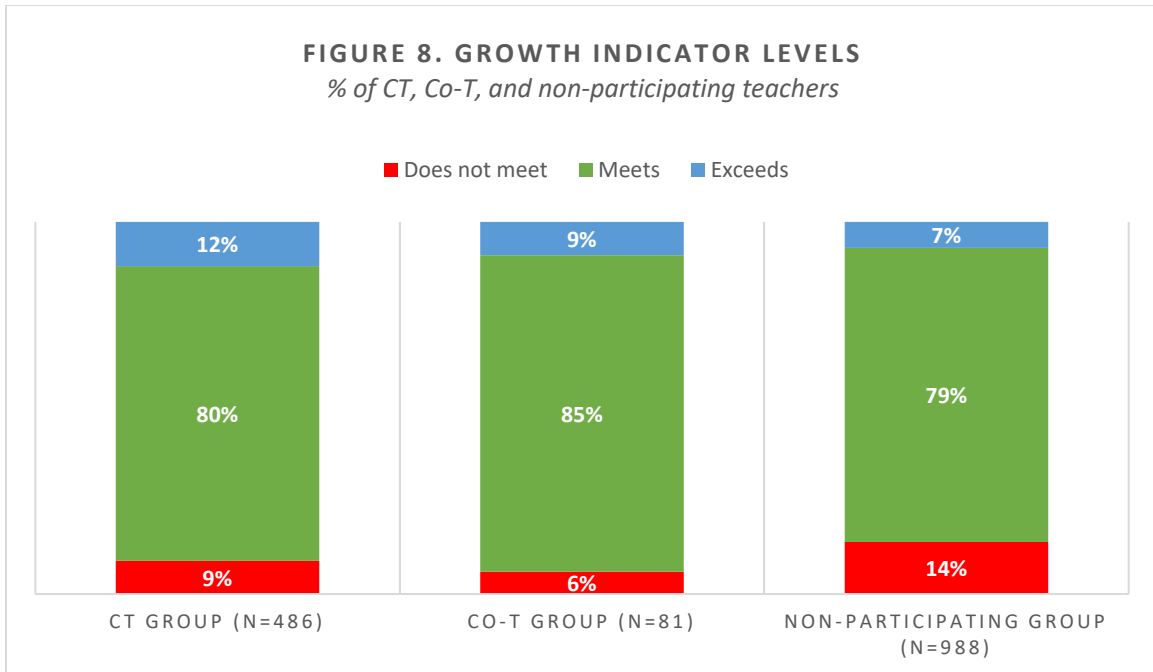
Several conclusions can be made from the figure. One, the CT group had the highest percentage of teachers in the *exceeded expected growth* level (i.e., 12%) and the Co-T group had the highest percentage of teachers in *meets expected growth* (i.e., 85%). All told, 91% of CTs and 94% of Co-Ts met or exceeded expected growth for the year.

Conversely, the non-participating group had the highest percentage of teachers in the *did not meet expected growth* level (i.e., 14%) compared to teachers in the CT or Co-T groups (9% and 6%, respectively). This group had 86% of teachers who met or exceeded expected growth for the year.

Differences between the CT and non-participating groups were statistically significant;[24] however, differences between Co-Ts and non-participating group were not.

Switching to index scores, **FIGURE 9** (following page) displays the mean 2021 index score for teachers in the CT and Co-T position compared to non-participating teachers.

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[24] Chi-square value 14.11(df=2, n=1474), p.=.001

FIGURE 9. MEAN 2021 EVAAS INDEX SCORES
CT, Co-T and non-participating groups

The figure shows that non-participating teachers posted the lowest mean score (-0.290) compared to the other groups, while the CT group had the highest mean score (0.133). The difference between the CT and non-participating groups was statistically significant,[25] but not for the Co-T group. The mean scores for all three groups fell within *meets expected growth*.

Additional analyses on the CT group suggest that longer participation in the position may be beneficial to teachers. For example, **FIGURE 10** shows that CTs who participated in the position two to four years had higher mean scores than teachers who participated one year and non-participating teachers. The difference was statistically significant.

FIGURE 10. 2021 MEAN INDEX SCORES
Years of CT participation and non-participating groups

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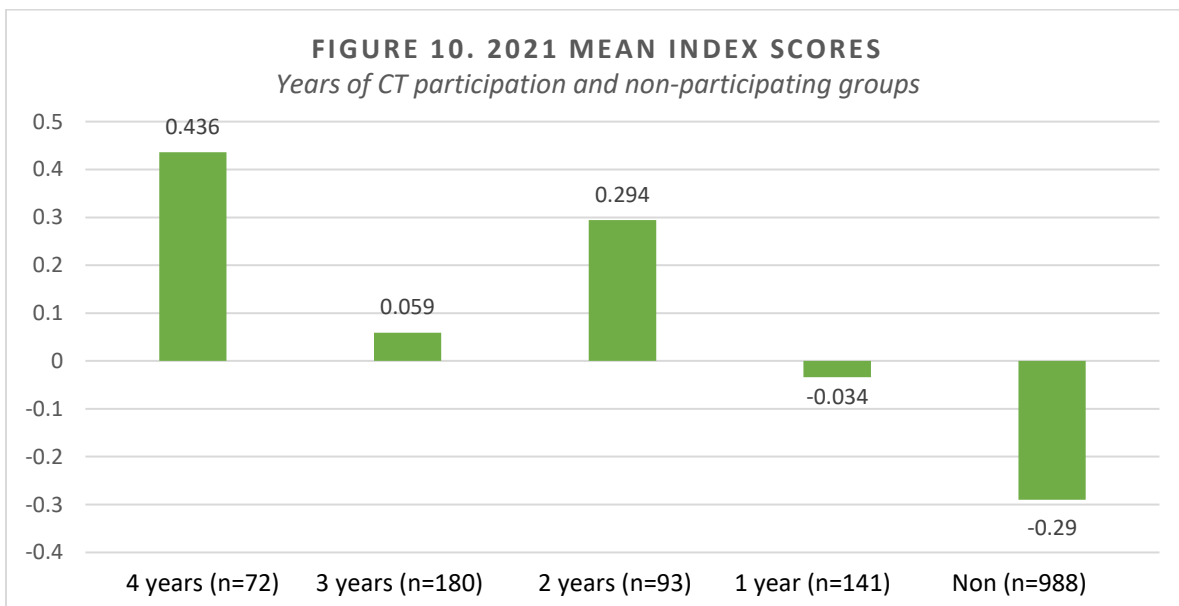
[25] based on t-test analysis p <.05

D. TEACHER LEADERSHIP OUTCOMES

Lastly, to answer the question about improvements in teachers' perception of teacher leadership, the evaluation tapped into various data sources throughout the 5-year study that included:

- North Carolina Working Conditions survey
- State-level evaluation surveys
- Teacher leadership surveys
- Interviews with participating teachers
- Case studies of FTs and MCTs

Key findings generated from these sources consistently demonstrated positive perceptions by teachers about the district's support for teacher leadership, regardless of their participation in the ATRs or partner positions. To add, teachers who participated in an ATR or partner position changed their understanding of leadership and how they viewed themselves and others as leaders. All told, the general sentiment shared by many was that creating leadership opportunities gave teachers a renewed sense of purpose and empowered them to use their expertise and influence to have a greater impact on teaching and learning.

Starting with teachers' perceptions of district support, findings summarized in the May 2019 *R3 Framework Evaluation Brief* showed that most teachers (71%) believed that the creation of ATRs showed the district's commitment to support effective teachers and to grow leaders. Most teachers were also in agreement that the positions were a useful way of retaining teachers.

To add, the 2020 Annual Report showcased teachers' assessments of the ways in which they were viewed as important contributors to their schools. For example, there were statistically significant increases from 2016 to 2020 in the percentage of Pitt County teachers who agreed with the following statements.[26]

- Teachers are recognized as educational experts.
- Teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction.
- Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.
- The faculty has an effective process for group decision making in this school.

What's more is that a higher percentage of teachers from Pitt County Schools compared to teachers in similar school districts had favorable perceptions of the ways in which they were respected as experts and leaders at their schools in 2020.

As for teachers who participated in the ATRs or partner positions, several evaluation reports[27] described how teachers grew as leaders and changed their view of leadership over time. For

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[26] Derived from the NC Working Conditions Survey, which is administered by the state to all NC educators every two years.

[27] 2021 Annual Report, 2019 Facilitating Teacher Case Studies, October 2021 R3 Evaluation Brief,

example, teachers viewed leadership as a shared responsibility because of their participation in the FT or CT position and reported strong agreement with statements like:
- leadership can be shared,
- leadership involves a group collectively making decisions, and
- leadership happens when people collaborate.

Interviews and case studies from past reports provide many descriptive examples of how teachers' understanding of leadership changed because of their participation in one of the positions. The following quotes from FTs were excerpted from the October 2021 *R3 Evaluation Brief.*

> What I thought of as a leader was someone who speaks a lot or does a lot. True leaders listen more and they can delegate more because there is a trust there. No matter who you are, you are only as good as the people you are with.

> I [was] the person to work behind the scenes, but this work has really forced me out of my comfort zone. It has been a growth point, and it helped me grow as a teacher leader, and what that looks like in my mind has changed. Teacher leaders used to be the teacher down the hall who had all the experience, but that is not what this is about. What has been interesting is reaching out to other people [to address a problem] that matters to them, and they are willing to work on this problem, too. And, it's not just our little group, [it's teachers outside of the CoP]. I like being a voice and support to others. I want to create a safe space [for teachers]; bring me what you have, and we'll work with it. A lot of our teachers have great ability but may not see it in themselves. Once they realize that they are doing good things, they go to the next level. Helping people grow, that's really it. If that can happen, then we automatically help the kids.

Finally, teachers who participated in a CoP as a CT or co-teaching team as Co-T were positively influenced by their teacher leader counterparts and, in some cases, were inspired to apply for a teacher leadership position. For instance, CTs agreed that their FT challenged them to grow professionally and empowered the CTs to offer their own opinions and suggestions. To add, the CTs viewed themselves as leaders and believed that other teachers shared this view of them. Several of the teachers and their stories are showcased in the June 2022 *R3 Evaluation Framework Brief.*

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

Our nation's schools are increasingly confronted with a variety of issues such as higher standards, greater nation- and state-level mandates (like class size reduction), and a diversity of student needs. Now more than ever, it is essential to attract, grow, and retain a pool of skilled educators who are prepared to teach diverse learners. What's more, experienced and effective teachers are a valuable resource to schools when they are given active opportunities to exercise their influence and contribute to teaching and learning solutions.

In recent years, however, this is proving to be a difficult task as teacher turnover and shortages have become a growing crisis in schools across the United States. For instance, a 2021 survey of nearly 1,200 school districts found that 75% of urban districts, 65% of rural districts, and 60% in suburban districts were experiencing teacher shortages.[28] According to the Learning Policy Institute, almost 10% of teachers leave the profession every year.[29] In the state of North Carolina, the current attrition rate is 8%, based on a 2022 report to the North Carolina General Assembly.[30]

Like many other districts, Pitt County Schools has historically struggled to retain effective teachers. Those tides have been turning over the past nine years, however, with the implementation of their human capital management system initiative, *R3 Framework: Recruit, Retain, Reward*. At the heart of this initiative is a Career Pathways Model that provides various opportunities for eligible teachers to participate in teacher leadership roles. This report, which marks the final of a five-year evaluation effort to provide PCS with an external perspective on the implementation and outcomes related to the initiative, contains evidence of its success and areas where additional focus is warranted. We offer the following conclusions that were gleaned from data collected throughout the course of the evaluation.

The evaluations documented a myriad of positive findings both in terms of implementation and outcomes. For one, it can be stated that PCS succeeded in increasing the number of effective teachers in its highest-needs schools. What's more, the DEEL office delivered ongoing, high-quality support and professional learning opportunities that were instrumental in preparing teachers for their leadership responsibilities. For their part, teachers who filled the leadership positions, i.e., FT and MCT, performed their responsibilities with high fidelity prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and persisted in carrying out their duties, though to a lesser extent, when they were faced with many obstacles resulting from the pandemic.

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[28] Article retrieved August 2022 from internet: The Teacher Shortage, 2021 Edition

[29] Carver-Thomas, D. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. Retrieved August 2022 from internet: Teacher Turnover

[30] Public Schools of North Carolina (2022). 2020-21 State of Teaching Profession in North Carolina. Raleigh. Retrieved August 2022 from internet: State-of-the-Teaching-Profession

Turning to the outcomes summarized in the report, there is ample evidence to show that the *R3 Framework* had a positive impact on all areas of focus. One, teacher leadership opportunities kept highly effective teachers in PCS classrooms.

Two, teachers in FT and MCT positions were able to extend their influence on other teachers and students despite their additional duties. For example, CoPs demonstrated success in various outcomes areas, including subject areas such as reading and math, but also in other areas such as student engagement and preparation for ACT tests. To add, teachers who worked with an FT or MCT demonstrated higher teacher effectiveness, i.e., EVAAS, compared to teachers who did not participate in any position.

Three, the *R3 Framework* has changed perceptions of teacher leadership in PCS. Teachers who participated in any of the positions felt more empowered and invested in serving as change agents in their schools. Regardless of their participation, most teachers in PCS believe that the district is committed to supporting the growth of teachers. They also feel valued as leaders and decision makers in their schools.

On balance, the evaluation took note of several areas where improvements could be made for the purposes of expanding and sustaining the status of teacher leadership in Pitt County Schools. To this end, we offer the following recommendations.

CREATE A TRACKING SYSTEM TO IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN THE CAREER PATHWAYS MODEL POSITIONS.
The report showed that close to half of the teachers in PCS have participated in at least one position. Tracking teachers and providing encouragement and support (e.g., professional learning) particularly as they enter in teacher preparation programs will help to ensure an adequate pipeline of teachers who are eligible for advanced positions in the long-term. Designated DEEL office staff could work with teachers to develop a long-term professional growth plan and have annual check-ins to encourage continued participation.

SCALE-UP COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY DATA CYCLES TO THE SCHOOL LEVEL.
Given the benefits of the data-driven process demonstrated by the CoP student outcomes, other school-based teams - such as grade-level teams, Professional Learning Communities, Problem Solving Teams, and School Improvement Teams - could benefit from employing the same process. Implementing the same process across the school will also help to create a common language and understanding of data-driven decision making and increase buy-in among staff on implementing teaching solutions that address problems of practice. Refer to the *July 2022 R3 Evaluation Brief* for several examples of schoolwide implementation.

ENSURE THAT TEACHERS ARE INCLUDED IN A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE WITH AN FT FOR MORE THAN ONE YEAR.
Teachers who participated in the CT position for two or more years posted positive EVAAS scores. Our review of retention rates for the position showed that 46% of teachers left the position after one year. The DEEL office could consider adding minimum term commitments.

CREATE A STANDARD FORMAT TEMPLATE FOR REPORTING STUDENT OUTCOME DATA IN THE COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY PROJECTS.

The large variation in how student outcomes are reported creates challenges when aggregating and summarizing data across projects. A standard template will make aggregation of outcomes across the CoPs more efficient and easier to communicate. It will also allow PCS the opportunity to better identify instructional strategies that are effective for the purposes of scaling up across schools.

APPENDIX A. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF R3 FRAMEWORK EVALUATION BRIEFS

1. R3 Evaluation Brief - Participant Awareness January 2018
   The brief was focused on teachers who participated in the Key BT, TLI, and/or Facilitating Teacher position. Key findings were presented on participants' 1) level of understanding of the *R3 Framework*, 2) perceptions about the alignment between the *R3 Framework* and educators' needs and professional goals, and 3) level of satisfaction with the quality of supports, program components, and timelines.

2. R3 Evaluation Brief - Teacher Awareness April 2018
   Teachers who had not participated in the *R3 Framework* teacher leadership opportunities were the focus of this brief. Data were provided on their level of awareness and understanding of *R3's* teacher leadership opportunities and perceptions about the value and benefit of teacher leadership.

3. R3 Evaluation Brief - CoP Year 1 August 2018
   Preliminary findings from a qualitative review of data on the implementation of Communities of Practice (CoP) under the leadership of the Facilitating Teachers were summarized in the brief. It examined the extent to which the CoPs implemented the four stages of a collaborative inquiry project and the outcomes of the projects. It also included data on the impact of the FT position on other teachers.

4. R3 Evaluation Brief - MCT Year 1 February 2019
   This brief assessed the rollout of the Multi-Classroom Teacher (MCT) position. It described 1) how teachers were selected for the position, 2) the supports provided to MCTs and their Co-Teachers (CoTs), 3) implementation of the MCT position in the classrooms, and 4) the potential impact of MCTs on teacher retention.

5. R3 Evaluation Brief - Teacher Awareness Update May 2019
   Changes in teachers' knowledge and perceptions about the leadership positions and pipeline programs was explored in this report. Data were collected from teachers who did not participate in any leadership positions/programs. Findings focused on changes in their levels of understanding and perceptions about the value and benefits of teacher leadership opportunities as a result of the continued rollout and communication of the initiative.

6. R3 Evaluation Brief - Pipeline Programs January 2020
   This brief focused on the two leadership development programs that are part of the *R3 Framework*—the Key Beginning Teacher (BT) program and the Teacher Leadership Institute (TLI). Included are findings on participating teachers' reasons for participating, levels of satisfaction with the programs, and outcomes - including leadership skills, teacher retention, and National Board Certification.

7. R3 Evaluation Brief - ATR Perspectives July 2020
   Administrators' perspectives of the Advanced Teacher Roles (ATRs) were the focus of this brief. It included a summary of findings on a) communication of the ATRs from the DEEL office, b) understanding of their role in supporting ATRs, c) the impact of ATRs, and d) the sustainability of the ATRs.

8. R3 Evaluation Brief - ATR Coaching Support January 2021
   This brief focuses on the role of the Career Pathway Specialists and the types of supports that they provided to the FTs and MCTs throughout the teachers' tenure in their positions. It also explores the value and quality of the supports in helping teachers to fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

9. R3 Framework Brief – CPS Supports October 2021
   The one-to-one coaching support provided by CPS staff is further explored in this brief. Qualitative data was collected to illustrate the four coaching functions from the Cognitive Coaching^{SM} model that were used by CPS staff: coaching, collaboration, consultation, and the facilitation of self-evaluation. This brief provides descriptions for each function along with examples demonstrating how the CPS staff utilizes various conversational tools to support teachers' growth.

10. R3 Framework Brief – Growing Teacher Leaders June 2022
    This brief highlights the way in which PCS is expanding its cadre of teacher leaders by telling the story of four teachers who initially collaborated on a team with a FT or MCT before moving into a leadership role at their school or a school in the district.

11. R3 Framework Brief – Schoolwide Implementation July 2022
    In this brief, two schools in Pitt County Schools—an elementary and a high school— are highlighted for accomplishing schoolwide implementation of the strategies and structures used by teacher leaders in the role of the Facilitating Teacher (FT) and Multi-Classroom Teacher (MCT).