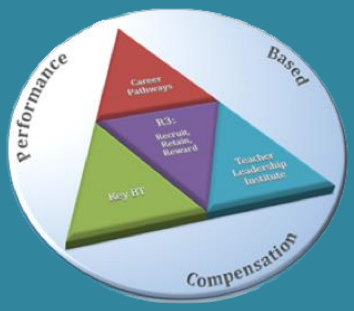


R3 Framework Evaluation Brief

Pitt County Schools

August 2018

During the 2017-2018 school year Pitt County Schools successfully implemented the new Facilitating Teacher (FT) position. The FT position is an advanced teaching role that is part of the district's Career Pathways Model, which provides multiple paths to support teacher leadership positions in an effort to recruit and retain strong educators.[1] FTs are highly-effective teachers, identified through multiple criteria, who are paid additional compensation to lead 2-4 Collaborating Teachers[2] (CTs) in a Community of Practice (CoP) while also maintaining their status as a full-time classroom teacher. Beginning in August 2017, Pitt County Schools had 54 FTs and 177 CTs working together in 29 schools.

In year one, FTs and CTs met twice a month in their CoPs to develop a collaborative inquiry project that addressed a schoolwide problem of practice.[3] The CoPs involved the use of semi-structured protocols to identify a measurable research question and action plan with strategies to focus on the problem of practice. After implementing the strategies, the FT lead the team through a collaborative inquiry cycle to analyze data and refine or expand strategies, as needed.

This edition of the *R3 Framework Evaluation Brief* summarizes preliminary data that was collected on the implementation and outcomes of the FT position and their CoPs. The findings were derived from survey data gathered by the Friday Institute for a state-level evaluation, and a qualitative review of school-based CoP presentations that were created by FTs and their CTs.

The *R3 Framework Evaluation Brief* is designed to provide Pitt County Schools (PCS) with "real-time" data that is collected as part of Measurement Incorporated's external evaluation of the R3 Framework. The reports present key findings on the development, rollout, and implementation of the various elements of the R3 Framework for the purpose of informing continuous improvement efforts. Outcome findings are summarized in annual end-of-year reports, which also include a comprehensive set of data findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

[1] This initiative is supported through a combination of state and federal grants.

[2] Collaborating teachers 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. For their part in the CoP, they receive an annual supplement of $1,200 a year.

[3] The problem of practice was identified by the school administrator, school improvement team, and/or other leaders from the school using schoolwide data.

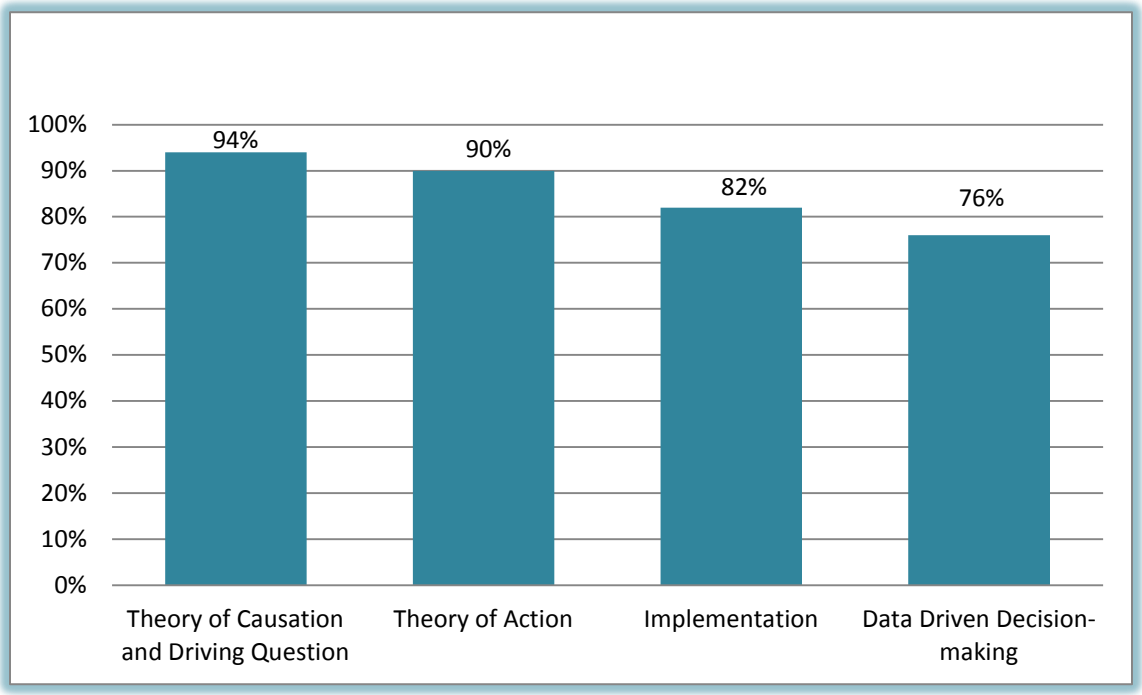
Implementation Findings

The collaborative inquiry project, led by the FT, included various stages; for the purposes of this report, we have summarized them into four components which are briefly described below.

- Theory of Causation and Driving Question[4]—data on the problem of practice (PoP) is collected. The team conducts research to identify potential strategies, interventions, or curriculum to address the PoP and then develops a measurable research question.
- Theory of Action—an action plan to address the research question is identified. The action plan includes the strategies, the identification of students, and the timeline for implementation.
- Implementation—the strategies that are outlined in the action plan are implemented.
- Data-Driven Decision making—the team utilizes a structured process to examine data collected and makes decisions on the effectiveness of the plan and the next steps in the implementation cycle.

FTs documented the progress of their CoP's project which was monitored by a district level mentor known as a Career Support Specialist (CPS). The external evaluator also reviewed the projects and summarized the percentage of CoPs that completed each stage of the collaborative inquiry project, which is outlined in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Stages of the Collaborative Inquiry Project
Percent of CoPs that Completed Each Stage



[4] In year one, driving question was referred to as the action research question.

As seen in the figure, nearly all of the CoPs (94%) developed a theory of causation and driving question. In many cases, their review of the research and data collection around the PoP resulted in the team narrowing the scope of the PoP. Only two FTs had not settled on a clearly defined driving question by year's end due to tackling a broad issue in their school.

Next, 90% of CoPs had a theory of action and 82% had implemented their plan by June. For the small handful of FTs who had not identified and/or implemented their plan, it appears that they were in the process of narrowing down strategies and/or developing tools for measuring progress or student outcomes. Similar to the FTs who had not defined their driving questions, these FTs had also tackled a broader PoP at their school, such as student engagement, multiple content areas, or MS/HS transition, to name a few.

Finally, 76% of FTs had conducted at least one data-driven decision making cycle with their CTs after implementing the theory of action. FTs and their teams utilized various measures to determine the effectiveness of their action plans. These included a blend of student assessments (e.g., Read 3D scores, EOC/EOG scores and proficiency data), pre- and post-tests specific to the intervention or developed by the team, and perception data gathered from students and teachers, the latter of which was also used to help identify strategies that would best meet the needs of students. The outcomes of their projects are summarized further down in this report; nevertheless, we can report here that the majority of the data-driven decision making cycles resulted in the decision to continue implementation of the action plan next school year as well as to expand their use of strategies.

FTs who had not conducted a data- driven decision making cycle were also likely to not have a driving question and/or theory of action. In addition, some FTs were awaiting data in order to complete a data driven decision-making cycle on their action plan.

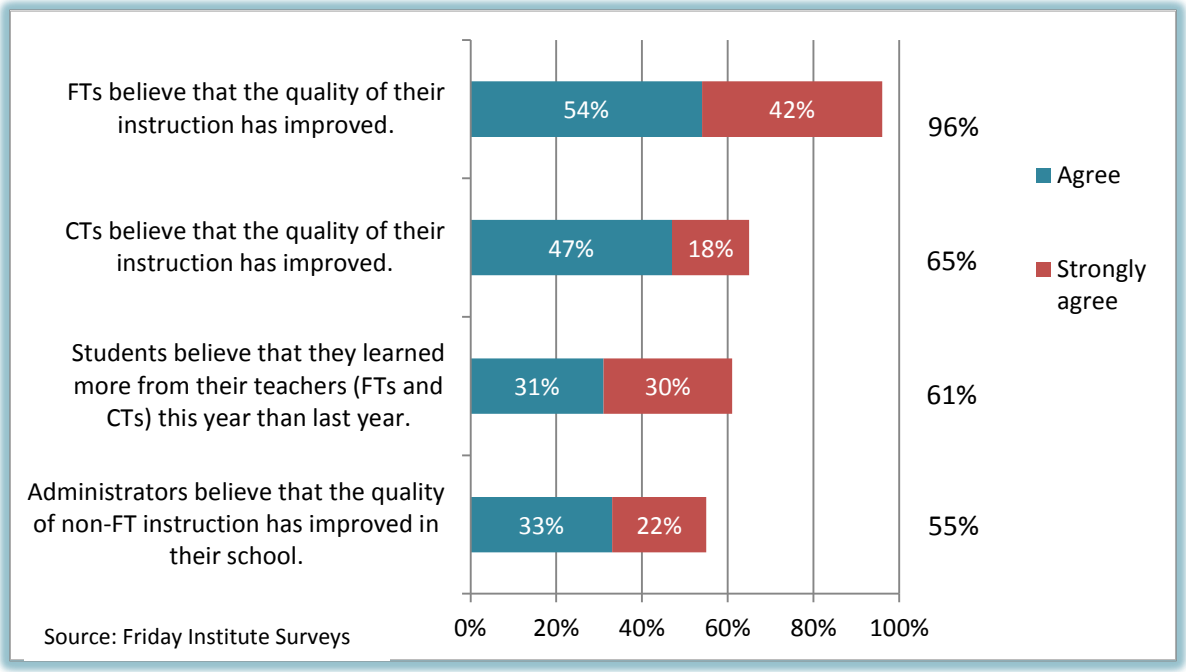
Outcome Findings

After just one year of implementation, the FT position is having a positive impact on instruction, teacher leadership, teacher retention, and student outcomes. Below is a summary of data for each of these outcome areas.

First, FTs, CTs, and administrators believe that the quality of instruction has improved as a result of implementing the FT position at their school. For example, nearly all of FTs (96%) and CTs (65%) agreed that the quality of *their* instruction improved. More than half of administrators (55%) agreed that instruction improved across *all* non-FT classrooms (see **Figure 2** on the following page).

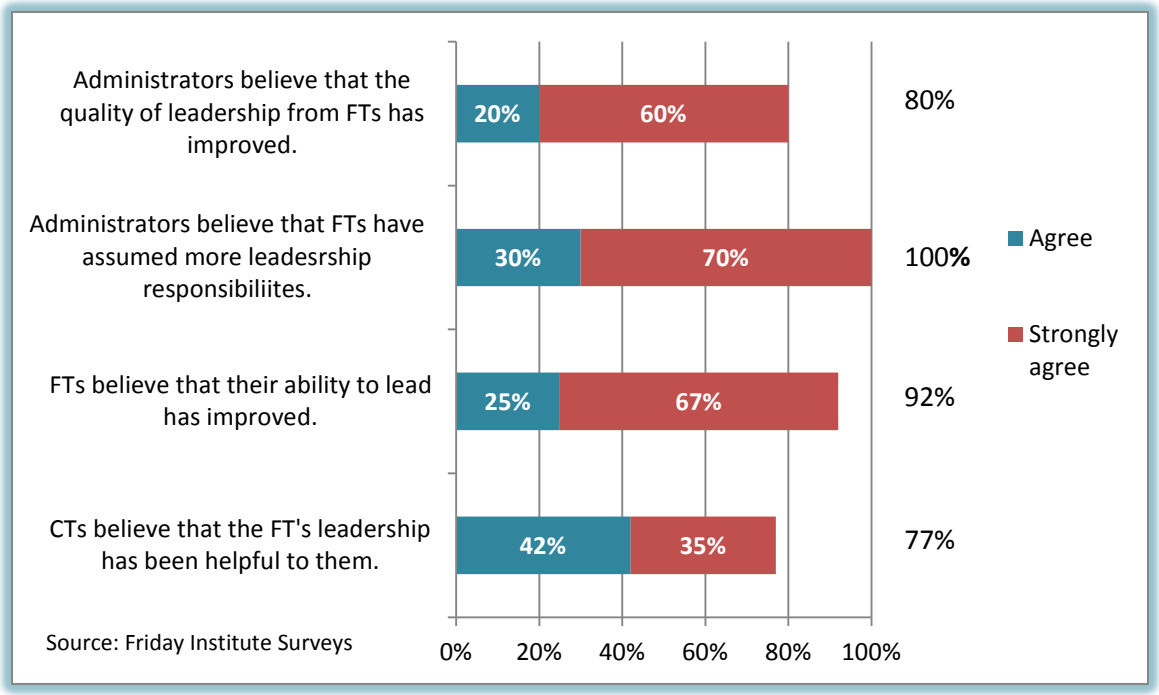
What's more, 61% of students agreed that they learned more from their teachers (who were FTs or CTs) this year compared to last year. Not shown in the figure, 71% of students agreed that their FT and CT teachers understood the best ways to teach them.

Figure 2. Impact of FT Position: Classroom Instruction and Teaching



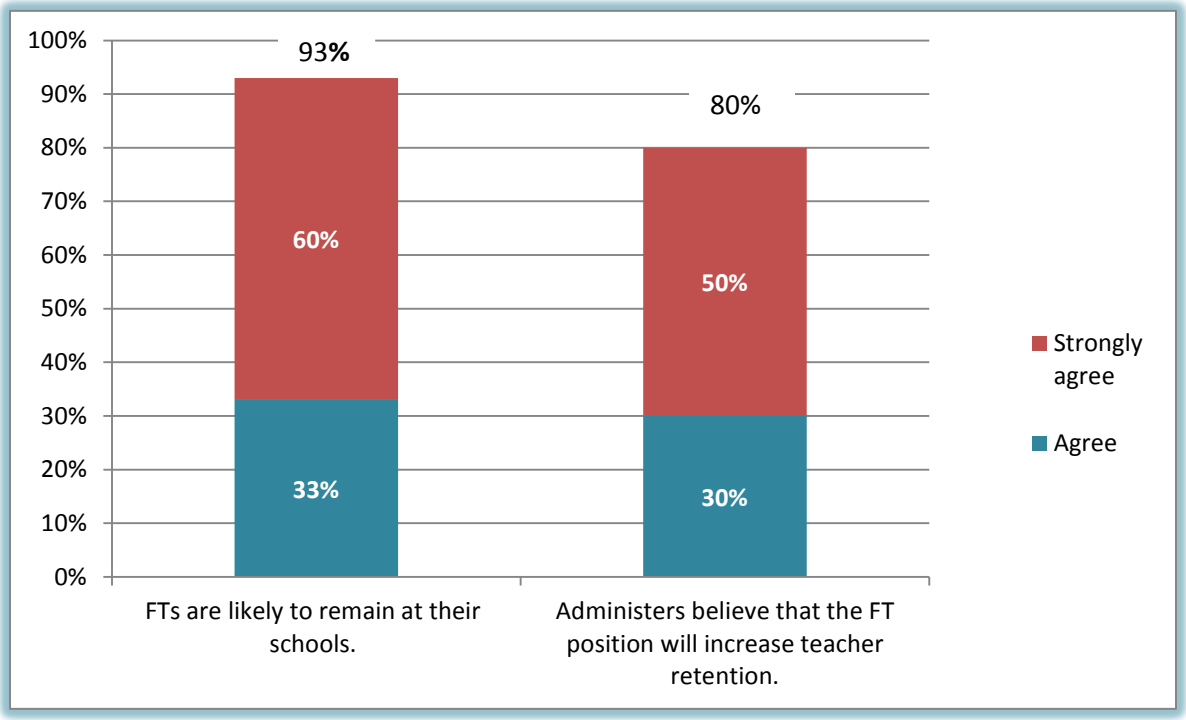
Second, FTs provided leadership to colleagues at their schools, which improved over the course of the year. Specifically, all administrators agreed that FTs assumed more leadership responsibilities and 80% believed that the quality of FT leadership had improved (**Figure 3**). Nearly all of the FTs also agreed that they improved their ability to lead and the majority of CTs (77%) deemed the leadership as helpful to them.

Figure 3. Impact of FT Position: Leadership



Third, the general sentiment was that teacher retention would increase as a result of the FT position. For example, 93% of FTs reported that the position increased the likelihood they would remain in the classroom at their schools. Moreover, 80% of administrators believed that the FT position would have a positive impact on the overall retention of teachers at their school (see **Figure 4**).

Figure 4. Impact of FT Position: Teacher Retention

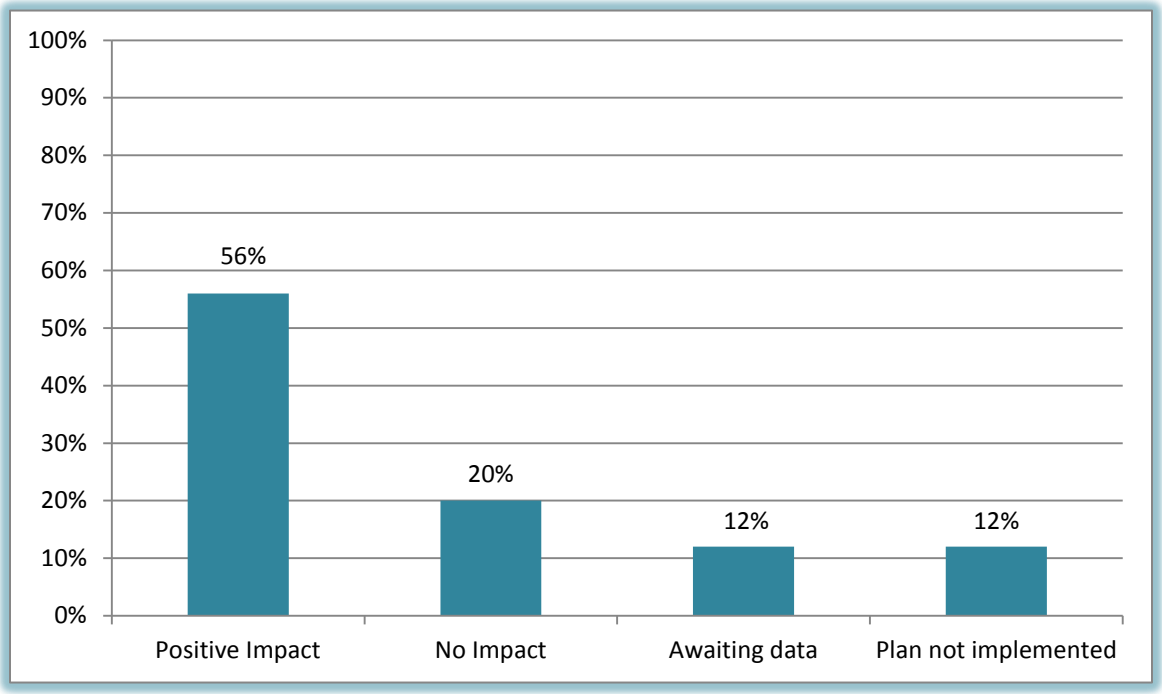


Source: Friday Institute survey data

Last but not least, preliminary data from the CoPs show promising results for students. Seen in **Figure 5** (following page), 56% of the CoP teams reported that students made improvements on various assessments and measures (e.g., Read 3D, EOC scores, Pre-ACT scores, teacher-developed rubrics) as a result of FTs and CTs implementing new strategies identified by their theory of action. To give an example, one CoP used an experimental-control group design and found that the percentage of proficient students in the experimental group was higher than the control group (54% vs. 45%) by the end of year. In another group, positive growth on STAR was reported for targeted students (i.e., scale score increasing from 56 to 110 points) in addition to a decrease in the percentage of students who were designated for Tier 3 intervention (i.e., up to a 23 percentage-point decrease).

Conversely, only 20% of the teams reported no significant improvements, which lead them to revise their theory of action. Twelve percent of the teams were still collecting data or were waiting for assessment data to be available, while another 12% had not fully implemented their theory of action by June and had plans to implement at the start of the 2018-19 school year.

Figure 5. Impact of FT Position: Student Outcomes
Percent of CoPs



Summary

Preliminary data presented in this brief lends itself to a positive appraisal for the initial rollout of the FT position. Specifically, the large majority of FTs led their CTs through all of the main components of the collaborative inquiry projects. Moreover, the FT position was viewed as having a positive impact on instruction, teacher leadership, and teacher retention. Equally important, over half of the CoPs documented improved student outcomes as a result of implementing strategies that were designed to address a schoolwide problem of practice. Collectively, these data serve as a good baseline for the newly appointed FT position. We encourage Pitt County Schools to consider using this data to establish guidelines and expectations for the work of the CoPs in the future.

The upcoming annual report will include a more comprehensive assessment of the Career Pathways Model during its first year of implementation, including a more in-depth examination of student outcomes. The report will also integrate qualitative and quantitative data that was collected on all of the pathways that were implemented during the 2017-2018 school year.

Measurement Incorporated was contracted by Pitt County Schools to conduct a 5 year, independent evaluation of the R3 Framework. For further information about this brief or about the evaluation, please contact Dr. Shelly Menendez at (630) 857-9592 or smenendez@measinc.com.