



# R3 Framework Evaluation Brief



April 2018

This edition of the *R3 Framework Evaluation Brief* summarizes data on educators’ knowledge and perceptions about the Career Pathways (CP) from those who have not participated in any of the positions that comprise the CP.<sup>1</sup> Nationwide research on performance-based compensation (PBC),<sup>2</sup> along with Measurement Incorporated’s own research, tells us that teachers’ understanding of PBC is important for buy-in. Teachers who are less knowledgeable about and trusting of the PBC structure are less likely to support it, compared to teachers who are more knowledgeable. Differences in teachers’ knowledge and perceptions are important to recognize at the beginning of the initiative so that common misperceptions can be addressed.

Findings presented in this brief were derived from an online survey developed by Measurement Incorporated that was administered through Pitt County’s weekly informational email to teachers who hadn’t participated in the CP. A total of 258 teachers representing all of the schools completed the survey (20% response rate). Key findings are organized by the following questions posed by the evaluation.

- What is the level of educator awareness and understanding of the positions that make up the Career Pathways?
- What are teachers’ perceptions about the value and benefit of Career Pathways?

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.<sup>3</sup> 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 include a comprehensive set of data findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

<sup>1</sup> The Career Pathway positions include the Key Beginning Teacher (Key BT) Program, Teacher’s Leadership Institute (TLI), Facilitating Teacher (FT), Collaborating Teacher (CT) and the Multi-Classroom Teacher (MCT).

<sup>2</sup> Chiang, H., Wellington, A., Hallgren, K., Speroni, C., Herrmann, M., Glazerman, S., & Constantine, J. (2015, September). Evaluation of the Teacher Incentive Fund: Implementation and Impact of Pay-for-Performance After Two Years. Retrieved 27 April 2018, from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20154020/pdf/20154020.pdf>;

Jacob, B. & Springer, M (2018). Teacher Attitudes Towards Performance: Evidence from Hillsborough County, Florida. Retrieved 27 April 2018, from [https://my.vanderbilt.edu/performanceincentives/files/2012/10/200808\\_JacobSpringer\\_AttitudePayPerf.pdf](https://my.vanderbilt.edu/performanceincentives/files/2012/10/200808_JacobSpringer_AttitudePayPerf.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> R3 stands for Recruit, Retain, and Reward. The Framework is a model that includes multiple career pathways and differentiated performance-based compensation that is designed to recruit, retain, and reward highly effective teachers.

## What is the level of educator awareness and understanding of the positions that make up the Career Pathways?

In the last edition of the *R3 Framework Evaluation Brief*, it was reported that teachers who participated in the Career Pathways initially learned about the positions through school administrators, the Division of Educator Effectiveness and Leadership (DEEL) staff, and former teacher participants.<sup>4</sup> Current data from nonparticipating teachers concurs with these findings. Specifically, school administrators and teacher participants were also the main source of information to nonparticipating teachers, in addition to the Pitt County “Info, Info” emails. **Table 1** shows the percentage of teachers who indicated each source of information.

**Table 1**  
Career Pathways Sources of Information  
Percent of teachers reporting each source

	% of teachers
School administrators	46%
Teacher leaders	46%
Pitt County “Info, Info” emails	41%
Instructional Coach	23%
Other nonparticipating teachers	16%
Beginning Teacher Coach/Mentor	14%
Pitt County District-level staff	9%
DEEL staff	6%

Further analyses revealed, however, that most teachers had a limited understanding about the purposes, eligibility, and participation requirements for the positions. As seen in **Table 2**, the percent of teachers who reported *limited* understanding ranged from 48% to 70% across the five positions. In other words, teachers had only heard about the position for the first time or needed *a lot* more information in order to

<sup>4</sup> Reported in the January, 2018 edition of the R3 Framework Evaluation Brief

better understand the positions. These findings confirm anecdotal data from teacher leaders in these positions who suspected that many of their colleagues were not familiar with the work that they were doing to support school improvement efforts.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 2**  
Career Pathways Programs and Positions  
Percent of teachers reporting “Good” or “Basic” levels of understanding

	Good	Basic	Limited
Key Beginning Teacher (Key BT)	23%	29%	48%
Facilitating Teacher (FT)	15%	35%	50%
Collaborating Teacher (CT)	15%	29%	56%
Teacher Leadership Institute (TLI)	11%	28%	61%
Multi-Classroom Teacher (MCT)	11%	19%	70%

The table also shows that teachers were more knowledgeable about some positions compared to others. Specifically, just over half of the teachers (52%) had *good* or *basic* levels of understanding about the Key BT program, which has been implemented for four years. Moreover, 49% of teachers reported *good* or *basic* levels of understanding about the Facilitating Teacher position, which is the most recently implemented position of the CP. Collectively these teachers understood the general purposes, requirements, and benefits of the positions but wanted more specific information. For example, this group was likely to ask for more information about teaching experience requirements and the specific roles and responsibilities of the positions.

Finally, while only 30% of teachers knew about the Multi-Classroom Teacher (MCT), it should be noted that this position was not implemented

<sup>5</sup> Reported in the January, 2018 edition of the R3 Framework Evaluation Brief

during the current school year and will be implemented during 2018-2019 school year.

**What are teachers’ perceptions about the value and benefits of the Career Pathways?**

Going one step further, the study looked at the relationship between teachers’ understanding of the CP and their attitudes about the value and benefits of the positions. The analyses revealed statistically significant relationships between the variables, such that teachers who were more knowledgeable about the various positions were more likely to agree with statements about the value and benefits of the positions, compared to teachers who were less knowledgeable. To highlight these differences, **Table 3** displays data on two groups: teachers who reported a high level of knowledge and teachers who reported a low level of knowledge about the positions.<sup>6</sup>

The table shows that for some of the value/benefit statements, the differences between the two groups were quite large. Specifically, 90% of teachers in the high knowledge group agreed that the positions reinforced the importance of teacher involvement in identifying solutions or strategies for addressing schoolwide issues, compared to only 37% in the low knowledge group. Moreover, the vast majority of teachers in the high group (87%) agreed that the CP were aligned with educators’ professional growth goals and demonstrated the district’s commitment to developing and supporting effective teachers, compared to 35% and 41% in the low group, respectively. Also worth noting is that 70% of teachers in the high group agreed that the CP has resulted in a more genuine focus on ways to support teachers compared to only 25% in the low group.

**Table 3**  
**Teachers’ Attitudes about the Value and Benefit of Career Pathway Positions**  
*Percent of teachers in agreement amongst high and low knowledgeable groups*

The Career Pathway positions...	% strongly agree/agree	
	High group	Low group
reinforce the importance of teacher involvement in identifying solutions or strategies for addressing issues within schools.	90%	37%
are aligned with educators’ professional growth goals.	87%	35%
demonstrate the district’s commitment to developing and supporting effective teachers.	87%	41%
may be an effective way for retaining effective teachers in our district.	75%	41%
have resulted in a more genuine focus on ways to support teachers.	70%	25%
have had a positive impact on our school’s culture of teachers working together.	61%	27%
have eligibility criteria that are fair.	61%	17%
amount of compensation for these positions are worth applying for them.	58%	24%
motivate me to apply for one or more of these positions in the future.	53%	27%
have had a negative impact on our school climate.	17%	10%

<sup>6</sup> Groups were formed using the lowest (low knowledge) and highest (high knowledge) quartiles on level of understanding score. The levels of understanding score included the combined ratings on the Key BT, TLI, FT, and CT positions. The MCT position was excluded because the position has not been implemented.

It is common for teachers to be concerned about the fairness and equity of eligibility criteria and the amount of compensation in differentiated pay initiatives. Pitt County teachers shared these concerns as demonstrated by the lower percentage of teachers in both groups who agreed that the eligibility criteria were fair and that the amount of compensation made it worth applying for the positions. Yet the differences between the groups remained large. While 61% of teachers in the high group agreed that the eligibility criteria are fair, only 17% of teachers in the low group agreed with this statement. Moreover, 58% of teachers in the high group agreed that the compensation was fair, compared to only 24% in the low group.

Also worth pointing out is that the vast majority of teachers in *both* groups did not feel that the CP had a negative impact on school climate.

---

## Implementation Considerations

---

Taken together, the findings probe a different perspective on teacher buy-in for differentiated pay initiatives. Undoubtedly, these initiatives challenge deep-seated traditions that run contrary to the notion of differentiating and compensating teachers based on their performance and leadership. Pitt County, like most other TIF grantees, will grapple with some degree of misunderstanding from teachers, particularly in the early years of grant implementation. Nevertheless, ongoing and targeted communication that addresses teachers' concerns will safeguard transparency as the grant continues to roll out. For certain, we know that increased levels of understanding translated into positive perceptions about the value and benefits of the positions; therefore,

Pitt County will need to provide more opportunities for teachers to learn about and better understand the teacher leadership positions.

For their part, nonparticipating teachers felt that direct communication was the best way for DEEL to ensure that all teachers had access to information about the leadership positions. They suggested that teacher leader representatives or DEEL staff visit schools to highlight the positions and provide more specific information on the goals and purposes of the positions. They suggested that introductory seminars or "job fair" style sessions could be offered at the beginning of the year or before applications are due. Direct communication from DEEL also ensures that potential applicants have the opportunity to learn about these positions whether or not their administrators recommend them for a position. Several teachers wondered if there might be opportunities for interested teachers to observe someone in the position or perhaps see a video of a teacher leader in action so that teachers could get a better feel for the position.

In addition to the thoughtful suggestions and recommendations from Pitt County teachers, we offer the following considerations for improving communication of the Career Pathways.

One consideration is to encourage school administrations to provide ongoing communication to teachers not only about the leadership positions in general, but also about the work of teacher leaders in their school. We found that teachers in the high knowledge group were also more likely than teachers in the low knowledge group to agree that their administrators had clearly communicated the role of teacher leaders in school improvement

and had provided opportunities for teachers to learn more about the purpose of teacher leaders. It might also be helpful if teacher leaders, themselves, were given opportunities to present their work to their colleagues.

Another consideration is to assign a Career Pathway Liaison to each school. The liaison would be a designated person who provides communication to teachers about the CP on a regular basis. This would alleviate some of the burden of communication from the school administrator and would also provide a direct connection to teachers.

In our evaluation of the PICCS TIF grant, school-level coordinators were added during the second round of grant funding with much success. These individuals provided direct communication to administrators and teachers about the grant components, timelines, and data collection schedules, as well as providing encouragement and guidance to program participants.

### About the Evaluation

Measurement Incorporated was contracted by Pitt County Schools to conduct a 5-year independent evaluation of the R3 Framework. The evaluation is designed to provide both formative and summative data to support decision making on the development and implementation of the Framework. For further information about this report or about the evaluation, please contact Dr. Shelly Menendez at (630) 857-9592 or [smenendez@measinc.com](mailto:smenendez@measinc.com).