

# R3 Framework Evaluation Brief



January 2018

This evaluation brief, the first of its kind, 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>1</sup> Reports of this type will present key findings on the development, rollout, and implementation of the various elements of the R3 Framework, which can be used by PCS to inform continuous improvement efforts. Outcome findings will be reserved for the annual end-of-year reports, which will encompass a more comprehensive set of data findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

This edition of the *R3 Framework Evaluation Brief* summarizes select data<sup>2</sup> that were collected in the fall of 2017 on the Key Beginning Teacher (Key BT) program, the Teacher’s Leadership Institute (TLI) and the Facilitating Teacher (FT) position—all three are part of the R3 Framework’s Career Pathways Model. Findings were derived from interviews with FTs (n=9) and Career Pathway Specialists (n=4), as well as from surveys completed by Key BT program and TLI participants (n=109). The report addresses the following implementation questions<sup>3</sup> posted by the evaluation.

- What is the level of educator awareness and understanding of the R3 Framework elements?
- To what extent are the R3 Framework elements aligned with educators’ needs and professional goals?
- To what extent are R3 participants satisfied with the quality of the supports, program components, and timelines?

<sup>1</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.

<sup>2</sup> The findings presented in this report do not represent all of the data that was collected in the Fall. The additional data will be reported at a later time and in conjunction with data that will be collected in the Spring of 2018.

<sup>3</sup> These questions were selected simply because a sufficient amount of data were available on all three Career Pathway elements.

## What is the level of educator awareness and understanding of the R3 Framework elements?

School administrators and Division of Educator Effectiveness and Leadership (DEEL) staff have been the main source of information about the Key BT program, TLI, and the Facilitating Teacher position, according to teachers who participated in these pathways. For example, the vast majority of Key BTs (89%) found out about the program when they got nominated (which in many cases were done by their administrator) and 48% specifically said they heard about it from their administrator. Similarly, 54% of the TLI participants found out about the program through their administrator and 33% found out from DEEL staff. Another source of information for both of these pathways was “word of mouth” from former teacher participants (40% of Key BTs and 22% of TLI learned about these programs from former teacher participants).

In addition to administrators and DEEL staff, some FTs also learned about the position when they participated in TLI (not all FTs participated in TLI, though). This is noteworthy because in all instances they reported that TLI helped them to prepare and also gave them the confidence to apply for the position. In the words of one FT, “I will say if I was not in TLI, I think I would have been a little more apprehensive, but I felt like I had the skills to hit the ground running.”

Regardless of the source of information, FTs agreed that they were well informed about the position, requirements, and expectations.<sup>4</sup> They also had ample opportunities to ask questions (of administrators and/or DEEL staff) before and after they applied for the position. Even still, some FTs noted that they had not anticipated the time commitment and the amount of

<sup>4</sup> Key BT and TLI were not specifically asked about communication around program goals, expectations, or responsibilities. Nevertheless, they reported high levels of satisfaction with the programs, which is displayed in Figure 1.

preparatory work that was necessary to launch and run their Community of Practice (CoP). Comments of this nature generally reflected FTs’ strong commitment to their work and a desire to be successful with their CoPs, rather than a complaint about the communication. The FT comment below captures the general sentiment.

*I think [that my understanding of the position] has been evolving. That would be fair to say...[It has been a challenge for me] to see an assignment and then really understand what I have to do prior to be able to roll it out and present it to my CoP so that they get something from it as well... Now it is my turn to turn it around and share it and to see if they are getting it and if they are ready to put it into practice.*

FTs acknowledged that it was early in the school year and that they needed more time and experience to increase their comfort level with the requirements; however, they also felt that a greater understanding of their workload by their colleagues, and in some cases administrators, would be helpful. For example, many FTs participated in other teacher leadership positions (e.g., Grade Level Department Chair, School Improvement Team) and were grappling to fulfill requirements for all. They hoped that more awareness on behalf of administrators and colleagues would allow them to obtain more participation flexibility with these positions and other school obligations, such as school-level meetings or trainings.

TLI and Key BT program participants also felt that greater awareness and understanding of these pathways by administrators and colleagues was warranted. Put by one TLI participant, “Most teachers have a vague idea of its existence but not of the clear vision” or “depth of the program.” Another reported, “Many other teachers in my school do not have similar training and so do not understand the purpose of some ‘TLI-ers’ projects. In addition, school administrators will agree that projects or

PD is a good idea but do not necessarily support teachers in execution. They do not understand some projects.” Similar to the FTs, TLI participants felt that more school-wide awareness of the requirements might result in increased support and guidance, particularly with their Capstone Projects.

They also viewed TLI and Key BT as a way of identifying teacher leaders in schools who could be available to support their colleagues in implementing leadership strategies, both inside and outside the classroom. “TLI is giving teachers in the building the capacities to lead other adults, which is making beginning teachers feel comfortable, valued, and supported, in the building,” said a TLI graduate. “In addition, TLI projects in the building from myself and other ‘TLI-ers’ are vertically aligning curriculum and working on using primary sources to boost literacy in the classroom.” Key BTs hoped that more awareness of the program would help to dispel the commonly held assumption that new teachers do not have enough experience to participate in school leadership positions. Finally, all groups felt that the experience was transformative and would like to see more teachers participate in the programs and/or similar trainings.

**To what extent are the R3 Framework elements aligned with educators’ needs and professional goals?**

One of the strongest themes derived from the fall data was that the Key BT program, TLI, and the Facilitating Teacher position were well aligned with teachers’ professional growth goals. Chief among their goals was a strong desire to contribute to their school’s improvement efforts, while also enhancing their skills as educators in the classroom. Indeed, teachers had a vested interest in remaining in their classrooms and saw these programs as a way of balancing their leadership and teaching goals.

More specifically, **Table 1** shows that nearly all teachers who participated in the Key BT and TLI did so because they wanted to continue to grow and learn as an educator. This was closely followed by a desire to take on more leadership roles in their school (higher for Key BT) and to have a greater impact on their school community (higher for TLI). Other reasons for their participation are listed in the table.

**Table 1**  
**Reasons for Participating in the Key BT and TLI Programs**

	Key BT % (n)	TLI % (n)
To continue to grow and learn as an educator	94% (59)	96% (44)
To take on more leadership roles in my school (collaborate)	84% (53)	78% (36)
To have a greater impact on my school community	67% (42)	85% (39)
To help advance my career	56% (35)	70% (32)
My school administrator(s) encouraged me to participate	56% (35)	48% (22)
I heard positive things about the program from other teachers.	46% (29)	28% (13)
My colleagues encouraged me to participate	41% (26)	20% (9)
To utilize the financial and/or mentor support that would be available for National Board Certification	N/A	41% (19)
To supplement my salary	N/A	43% (20)

Interviews with a sample of FTs revealed similar reasons for their decision to apply for the position. Like the Key BT and TLI participants, teachers viewed the FT position as a way to continue to grow as a professional and to advocate for the subjects that they were passionate about. For the more experienced teachers, the position renewed their goals and vision for their teaching career. To the latter point, one teacher said, “[The FT position] takes me out of my comfort zone, but that is what I needed. I have 18 years of teaching and it’s easy to become complacent...After participating in TLI, I felt confident putting myself out there [for the FT position].” Some FTs said that the main avenue for professional growth for teachers in the past was for them to enter an administrative track, but they preferred to remain in the classroom. The FT program provided this opportunity.

Akin to the attraction of Key BT and TLI, teachers who applied for the FT position did so because they viewed it as a way of broadening their sphere of influence outside their classroom. They wanted to collaborate with others to identify common solutions to issues going on in their schools. Put by a Career Pathway Specialist who is a district-level support staff for FTs, “The research piece of their work has given them an avenue to problem-solve issues that they have seen the system try to fix. It has given them a voice and ownership over their practice. It’s not just empowerment that they get, but it’s more transformative. They needed a vehicle and the opportunity to address problems in their schools.” To this point, several different FTs had this to say:

*I feel very invigorated by the idea of letting teachers decide what is going on in the classroom. And not just my own, but inspiring other teachers and working with them to make the change in their classrooms too, rather than the trickle-down approach where we are being told what to do.*

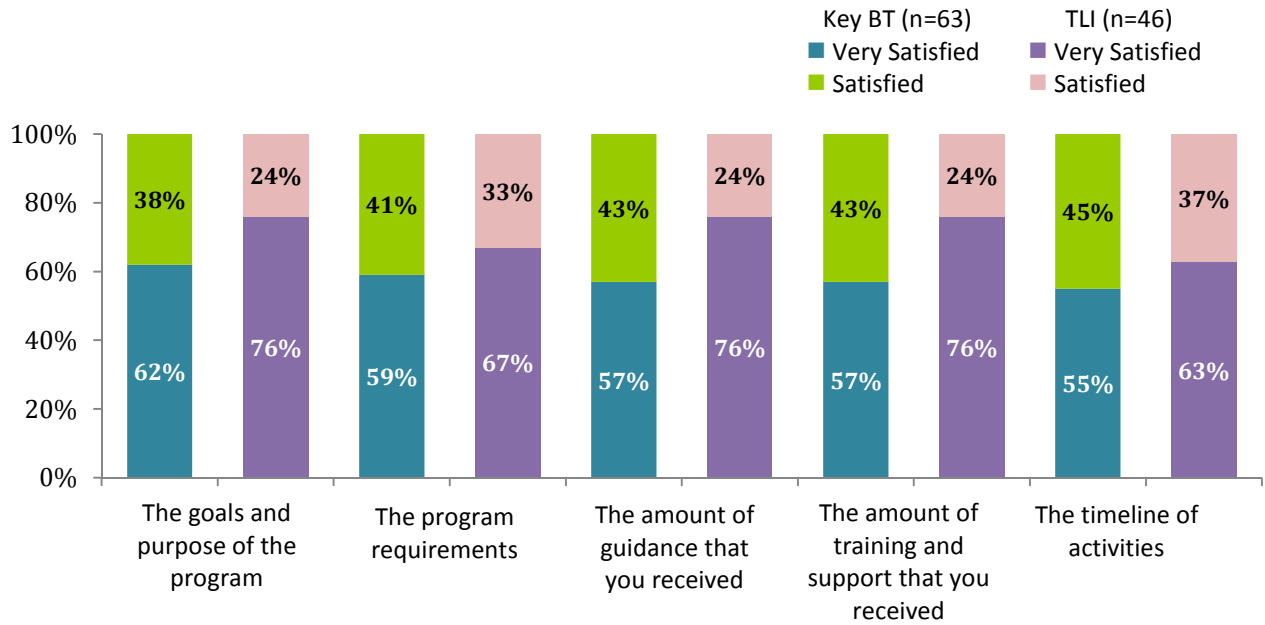
*When it was presented, I liked that I would have a true voice in our building. We would be able to, as educators, to work on a PoP [Problem of Practice] and be the ones to answer and analyze, and strategize, rather than being given to us—it really motivated me.*

Finally, across all three elements of the Career Pathways Model, teachers lauded the opportunities to collaborate and network with teachers across the districts; thereby extending their impact and sense of an educational community beyond the walls of their buildings. For example, comments from several Key BT graduates included, “[The Key BT program] gave me an opportunity to network with other beginning teachers who were interested in making a difference in their school communities.” “The program has allowed me to network with other BT’s and given me a community of educators to discuss creative and engaging strategies.” In a similar vein, a TLI graduate reported, “I built connections and relationships with colleagues that have lasted well beyond the duration of the program and have helped me realize the depth of dedication that exists in Pitt County Schools.”

### To what extent are R3 participants satisfied with the quality of the supports, program components, and timelines?

Levels of satisfaction were very high across all three of the Career Pathways with the quality of the professional learning opportunities standing out, in particular. **Figure 1** presents satisfaction data from the surveys on the Key BT program and TLI. For both, participants were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the programs, including the goals, requirements, guidance, the amount of training, and the timeline of activities. No respondents indicated that they were *not* satisfied with any aspects of the program that they rated.

**Figure 1**  
**Satisfaction with the Key BT Program and TLI**  
**Percent of Teachers Responding Satisfied or Very Satisfied**

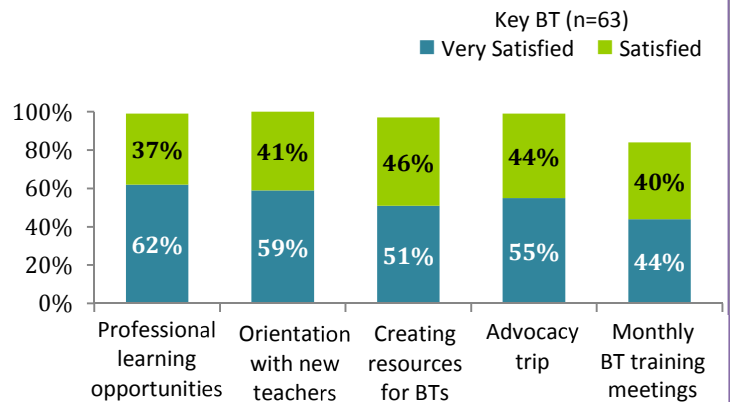


What’s more, nearly all of the participants were satisfied with the various components of each program (see **Figures 2 and 3**). Regarding the Key BT program, **Figure 2** shows that the professional learning opportunities, orientation for new teachers, opportunities to create resources and the Advocacy Trip were well regarded by virtually all Key BTs. Slightly fewer Key BTs were satisfied with the monthly BT training meetings. Comments made by two people about the program include:

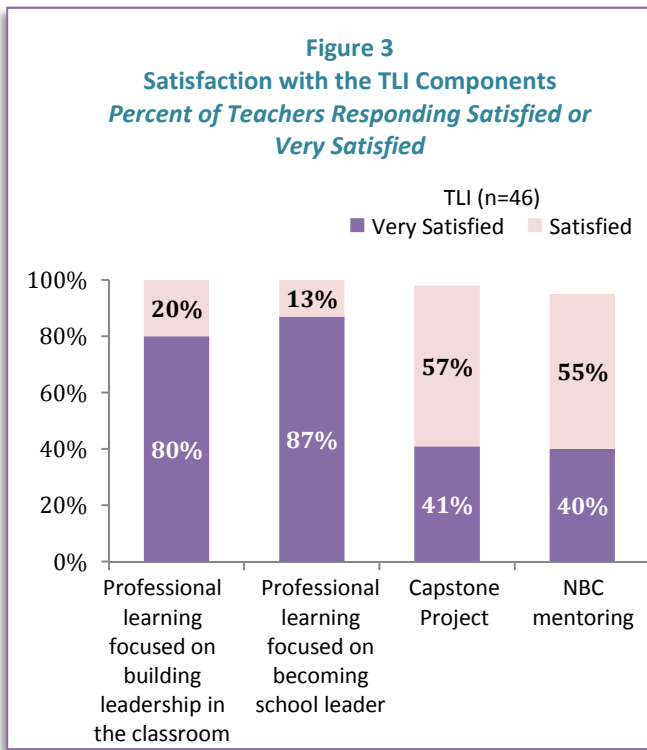
*I have thoroughly enjoyed attending the Key BT training and have felt empowered as a leader not only in my school but also within the educational community. I believe it is so important to help our kids receive the best education they possibly can, and if that means advocating for them at a state level or within the community about needs that could be met, then I feel that I have a great support system within the Key BT program to better know how to do that now.*

*The Key BT program was wonderful. I felt very welcomed and encouraged as a professional in my field. I received many resources from the Key BT meetings we had that I have incorporate-ed into my teaching. I truly appreciate being part of the program and wish all BT training was as strong and useful as the Key BT training!*

**Figure 2**  
**Satisfaction with the Key BT Program Components**  
**Percent of Teachers Responding Satisfied or Very Satisfied**



Seen below in **Figure 3**, all TLI teachers were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with both types of professional learning opportunities; indeed, the vast majority (80-87%) reported the highest level of satisfaction (i.e., *very satisfied*). The Capstone Project and National Board Certification (NBC) mentoring also received high marks. Below the figure are comments made by different TLI graduates that elucidate their levels of satisfaction with TLI and the professional learning opportunities, in particular.



*TLI has been the best professional development program I have experienced. It is not a one size fits all program, but rather focuses on your identity as a leader and you build on your strengths and learn to work on your weaknesses. It has changed the way I approach leadership and helped me not only in my classroom but also in my school community.*

*The Teacher Leadership Institute has been the single greatest community I have been a part of in my career in education. The program seeks highly motivated teachers who want to do more in their classrooms and lead in their buildings*

*without having to go into administration. The training is engaging and relevant to what we do in our classrooms and covers a wide variety of helpful topics from student engagement, collaborating and communicating to multiple personalities in the workplace, and effective processes of analyzing data to make informed decisions. I truly credit TLI for developing my capacities as a leader for both students and adults in my building.*

*I have been beyond impressed with the quality of instruction and information that I've received through Teacher Leadership Institute and Facilitating Teacher training. I have recommended the program very highly to my colleagues who I think would be interested in and enjoy it.*

Concerning the FT position, teachers echoed the same levels of satisfaction with the supports, requirements, and position components. They, too, felt that the professional learning opportunities (e.g., Adaptive Schools and Data-Driven Dialogue) were high quality and “transformative” to their role as a teacher. The trainings equipped them with tools and strategies needed for successful collaboration and problem-solving, not only in their CoP but also in their classrooms. In the words of one FT, “I enjoyed every single minute of it [Adaptive Schools training]...I reference the materials; I use the materials that we got in my classroom. In the groups that we do, I am using that sort of leadership role in developing the class and how we structure our day.” Another FT had this to say:

*The Adaptive Schools has been the single most important training that I have had an educator. The importance of mindfulness...when you speak with others has made a huge difference with me being a grade-level chair, with me being a mentor, talking about data in SIT, all of that kind of stuff. It really opened my eyes...by putting myself on the “balcony.”*

Likewise, FTs viewed the support provided by the Career Pathway Specialists (CPS) as “invaluable” and in tune with their needs. They appreciated the variety, flexibility, and individualization of these supports. For example, CPS provide monthly onsite support to FTs,<sup>5</sup> regularly scheduled group trainings, and a google site that warehouses materials, tools, and resources, to name a few. All of the FTs provided specific examples of how their CPS had personally helped them by modeling strategies, planning CoP meetings, connecting them to other FTs with similar a PoP, supporting their data analyses—the list goes on. Consequently, the FTs feel well-supported in their role.

## Midyear Considerations

While data collection for the R3 Framework evaluation is in the infancy stage, already we can begin to outline a positive picture of teachers’ experiences with the Key BT Program, TLI, and Facilitating Teacher positions. It is clear that these pathways are being rolled out successfully in tandem with one another, even though each one is a substantial venture in itself.<sup>6</sup> Equally important, these pathways are meeting the needs of teachers and are strongly aligned with their leader- and teaching-related professional goals. The nature and quality of supports, including the professional learning opportunities, are “some of the best” that they have participated in during their teaching career. They overwhelmingly hold the DEEL office and staff in high regard. Finally, FTs, in particular, feel well informed about the goals, requirements, and expectations of the position.

Teachers’ comments suggested minor tweaks at this stage of roll-out. Chief among them was expanded communication. Specifically, teachers suggested that DEEL staff utilize multi-methods and channels to describe the goals, purposes and requirements for each of the pathways, as well as the qualifications for participation. For example, some suggested that perhaps graduates of these pathways could visit other schools to talk about their experiences and share their outcomes and successes. These types of opportunities would allow others to get a better sense of the depth of the work involved and the potential for impact, not only with their students but also with their colleagues.

Teachers offered other tweaks or suggestions that are not specifically mentioned in the report findings, but are bulleted below for future consideration.

- Offer annual or biannual cohort meeting(s) to TLI and Key BT program graduates so that they could have continued opportunities to meet, collaborate, and share successes and challenges.
- For TLI and Key BT graduates, find ways to provide continued (and perhaps more formal) opportunities for them to collaborate with educators and administrators within their schools to address schoolwide challenges. They would also like continued opportunities to lead or participate in the development of countywide professional learning events.
- Offer continued opportunities for program participants to advocate at the state level on behalf of the teaching profession and the educational needs of the county.

<sup>5</sup> Initially, onsite support was scheduled every month, but eventually was offered upon request, when needed.

<sup>6</sup> Responses from teachers and administrators (not the focus of this report) suggest that the launch has been successful.

- Continue to reach out to identify FTs who are struggling to juggle multiple responsibilities and respond with flexibility and enhanced support as allowable. DEEL-sponsored supports, such as Google hangouts, PD sessions, and CPSs will aide in this identification.
- Further clarify the role of administrators in monitoring and supporting the pathways.
- Look to identify suggestions and/or best practices that could be useful to district schools that are not yet able to operationalize these programs.

### 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).