



R3 Framework Evaluation Brief



January 2021

Pitt County Schools' *R3 Framework* is a teacher retention initiative that empowers teachers who have a demonstrated record of effectiveness to become leaders of change in the classroom. The advanced teacher roles (ATRs) that are part of the initiative include the Facilitating Teacher (FT) and the Multi-Classroom Teacher (MCT). Teachers who fill these positions participate in leadership-related training from the district's DEEL office¹ and ongoing coaching support from one of four designated district persons, known as a Career Pathway Specialist (CPS). All of the CPS staff are experienced coaches, having previously served in the role of Instructional Coach in the district. They, too, participate in advanced training in adult mentoring, teacher leadership, and data-driven practices so that they can support teachers' application of leadership skills.

This edition of the *R3 Framework Evaluation Brief* focuses on the role of the CPS 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. The findings are derived from several data sources. One, an online survey was administered in December, 2020 to teachers who were in the role of FT or MCT. A total of 59 teachers (49 FTs and 10 MCTs) completed the survey, resulting in a 66% response rate. Two, a focus group was conducted with all of the CPS staff in November, 2020.

Types of Support

The CPS staff provided a comprehensive set of supports, according to most if not all of the teachers. Seen in **Table 1**, support included one-to-one coaching, modeling, observation, and feedback.

Table 1. Type of Support	% of FTs	% of MCTs
1:1 coaching	94%	100%
Modeling	91%	90%
Feedback	92%	80%
Observation	88%	80%

Source of data: survey

More specific, 94% of FTs and 100% of MCTs received 1:1 coaching sessions that involved dedicated time for the CPS to provide differentiated support to teachers. Second in frequency was modeling support (91% of FTs and 90% of MCTs), which meant that CPS staff demonstrated

the use of strategies from trainings such as Adaptive Schools, Data-Driven Dialogue, and/or Cognitive CoachingSM. For example, a CPS might be asked by an FT to show his Community of Practice (CoP) how to engage in a collaborative inquiry cycle with data.

The third type of support listed in the table included feedback from the CPS, which was reported by 92% of FTs and 80% of MCTs. For example, the CPS provided reactions to the development and implementation of an FT's CoP action research project. Similarly, the CPS staff provided feedback to MCTs on their use of leadership and adult mentoring skills. Finally, 88% of FTs and 80% of MCTs reported that the CPS staff observed their teams to provide constructive feedback and hands-on support.

According to the CPS staff, three features were common to all of the supports, intentionality, continuity, and consistency. Beginning with intentionality, the CPS staff felt it was important to be purposeful with their support so that they could address the individual needs of each teacher rather than apply a general approach of support to everyone. In the words of one CPS, "we've tried to be very intentional about meeting the teachers where they are and really evaluating their individual needs." The CPS staff appreciated the opportunity to be assigned to the same teachers over time so that they could develop trusting relationships. This also allowed them to gain a better understanding of, and response to, the changing needs of teachers as the teachers developed their skills.

Second, the supports were aimed at ensuring continuity in teachers' use of a common language and the skills that were integral to their work. Put by one CPS, "We really front loaded a common language...in the early years and then built their capacity to use [the strategies and language] consistently over time to the point where they were internalizing their work." Another added, "If we do a training with them...we try to continue with the language and follow-up with them...So it's not just a one and done, which is what happens so much with PD... One of the reasons that our FTs and MCTs have been so successful is because all of the training is continually reinforced and we are building on the foundation that has already been laid... We've set the tone that this training mattered and let's not let it go. Let's continue to set goals and refine skills."

Finally, the CPS staff collaborated as a team to ensure that the supports and the communication to the teacher leaders was consistent. "We do a lot of collaborative work together. We've created a common vision for our roles," said one CPS, who went on to say, "We've had this aligned message...It has been incredibly helpful to me to have these colleagues who speak the same language, who support people the way I do, and who have the same values that I do." They credit leadership at the DEEL office for setting the stage by outlining a vision for the work and allowing the CPS staff to contribute to the vision as well as their role in the process. This sentiment was captured in the following comment, "I have never been in a place with this collaborative culture. One where everyone in the building could say the same thing. And that alone has a lot to do with our ability to be successful. The common vision, the clarity, it speaks to the relationships and the culture, it's the foundation for our success."

Value and Quality of CPS Support

When asked to identify the supports that were important to their success in the ATR, **Table 2** shows that FTs and MCTs were in agreement that 1:1 coaching sessions ranked the highest (91% of FTs and 80% of MCTs).ⁱⁱ

Table 2. Ranking of Supports	% of FTs	% of MCTs
1:1 coaching	91%	80%
Observation	84%	75%
Feedback	86%	63%
Modeling	84%	56%

Source of data: survey

There was also agreement among most teachers that observations were highly valued, as indicated by 84% of FTs and 75% of MCTs. Specifically, FTs referenced observations of their CoP and MCTs referenced observations of the co-teaching team.

Finally, **Table 2** shows that more FTs than MCTs rated feedback and modeling supports as important. Feedback that was most valued by FTs was on their CoP's collaborative inquiry project. Modeling strategies of importance were related to data analyses and inquiry. See **Box 1** for specific examples of support from FTs and MCTs.

Not only did many teachers deem the supports as significant to their success, their assessment of the quality of the supports was overwhelmingly positive. For example, in **Table 3**, nearly all teachers strongly agreedⁱⁱⁱ that they felt heard, understood, and respected by their CPS (92-94% of teachers).

Table 3. Quality of Support	% of teachers ^{iv}
I feel heard and understood.	94%
The CPS respects my experience and skills.	92%
The CPS provides timely support.	90%
The CPS provides timely and appropriate feedback.	90%
The CPS is intentional in addressing my professional needs and concerns.	90%
I feel supported to critically reflect on my practice.	86%

Source of data: survey

To add, the CPS staff provided timely support and feedback to most teachers and were intentional in addressing their concerns

Box 1. Examples of CPS Support

My CPS assisted our CoP in a recent [Cycle of Inquiry] COI because we felt stuck due to the COVID restrictions that have paralyzed our research interventions. By asking us the perfect questions, my CPS led our group to an honest discussion which led us all squarely on the exact solution we needed to be successful in our problem of practice. She has a gift for asking exactly the right question to unlock our thinking.

She facilitated one of our COI when we were just getting started collecting data. We really weren't sure of the direction we needed to proceed in. With her help, we were able to have a very productive discussion about what we were doing and what we wanted to accomplish.

As we transitioned to hybrid model and even to virtual instruction, our CPS supported us in a brainstorming session trying to figure out how to implement and assess strategies virtually, effectively.

The CPS has supported me with my Cognitive CoachingSM abilities, providing support in my role by allowing me the ability to bounce ideas to them, being a support because of being in uncharted territory with this new position.

The CPS has continued to direct my focus towards my co-teachers' needs when I get caught up between teacher/student needs and growth. This helps me to focus on improving my mindset to be more outward.

(90% in strong agreement). Lastly, 86% of teachers felt supported by the CPS to critically reflect on their practice.

The CPS staff have equally benefitted from their relationship with the ATR teachers. They expressed a sense of fulfillment in witnessing the growth and effectiveness of the teachers. Their comments, provided below, not only demonstrate the extent to which they have enjoyed their role but also showcase the impact of the leadership opportunity on the teachers.

It has been fun to watch teachers find their voice. Teachers have been conditioned to wait to be told what to do. It's almost as if they have been browbeaten into waiting and do the things put in front of them. It's like they forgot to give themselves permission to investigate their own problems. So to be able to see them find their voice and see the energy they put into it, and build collectivity around the problem. We were just talking about how excited they were to do the research, to be able to ask a question, and really understand that this is a problem. We can impact it ourselves without waiting and we have power in their meetings. We do have agency in our own group and we can lead ourselves. It has been a huge identify shift.

They have built a sense of community and teacher efficacy. [They] became a model for what we have envisioned, which is that it is bleeding from the bottom up. It was a beautiful thing to watch. To watch [them] use the tools. Before [the position], they didn't have any tools. They did things because that is the way it was done... It's been an honor to watch them grow and have pride and self-worth that they can control and can do something good for their students.

We see a lot more team meetings in COVID and it's almost a sense of joy to see the way that they are interacting as a team and to see how that has shifted. We know where that started. Their sense of leadership and how they work with other adults has shifted. It's a gift to be a part of it. Even the MCTs, they went into it with a different understanding of leadership than they do now. The growth is remarkable and inspiring.

Summary

The findings presented in this brief showcase the various ways in which the CPS staff supported teacher leadership roles that are part of the *R3 Framework* initiative. Notably, the supports were universally perceived by teachers as essential to the implementation of their leadership roles. Though not reported in the findings, teachers' ratings did not differ significantly by year of participation or by position. This means that the value of support from the CPS persisted throughout the tenure of both the FT and MCT positions.

Additionally, the supports were marked by indicators of quality including intentionality, continuity, and consistency. Research shows that quality of coaching, rather than the amount, is correlated with positive instruction-related outcomes and student achievement.^v Therefore, continued support from the CPS staff is likely to have lasting effects on teacher leaders and

their students. Likewise, the CPS staff pointed out that their success was dependent upon support and buy-in from district and school administrators. They cited supports such as avenues for sharing the work and outcomes of the teacher leader groups and avenues for implementing successful strategies across the district as important to larger-scale impact and sustainability of the initiative.

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 include a comprehensive set of data findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

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

ⁱ The Division of Educator Effectiveness and Leadership (DEEL) is a department within Pitt County Schools that created the R3 Framework and oversees its implementation.

ⁱⁱ Teachers rated each type of support using a three-point Likert Scale that included very important, moderately important, and minimally important. The table reports the percentage of teachers who selected very important.

ⁱⁱⁱ Teachers were asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement using a four-point Likert Scale that included strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

^{iv} The responses from FTs and MCTs were combined because there were no discernible differences between the two groups.

^v Kraft, M., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2016, November.) The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the causal evidence. Brown University Working Paper.