



**Professional Education Program: Progress to Date  
Year 3 Report**

**September, 2016**

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## Executive Summary

The New Haven Public Schools asked a team of researchers at the Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut, to conduct independent research on the implementation of the Professional Educators Program (PEP) in the New Haven Public Schools. Our research was guided by the following questions.

1. Have NHPS's human capital practices changed relative to before PEP was implemented?
  - a. To what degree does educator evaluation affect educators' practice?<sup>1</sup>
  - b. To what degree is educator effectiveness considered in human capital decisions?
  - c. To what degree have human capital practices provided targeted support to high-need schools?
2. How do educators view specific changes to NHPS's human capital practices?
3. Did student performance improve after PEP implementation?

In response to these questions, our research generated findings as follows:

First, teachers and school leaders continue to give high marks for the expanded roles created by the PEP initiative. All (100%) of school leaders surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the PEP roles are valuable, and 96% of teacher surveyed responded similarly. Very high proportions of teachers believe that these roles improve their practice (83%), improve collaboration (92%), and raise student achievement (92%). Participants reported that these roles enabled them to learn new strategies to improve their practice and that of others, increased the networks through which they could access advice and support, supported their need for self-direction, increased communication across schools, and provided excellent professional learning opportunities for them. Primary challenges to their work in these roles included lack of support from school and district administrators, teacher resistance and lack of time. Within the roles, balancing individuals' need for autonomy and self-direction with schools' and the district's need for coherence remains an ongoing challenge and opportunity for NHPS. School context and principal support play a key role in the success of the PEP roles for teachers.

Second, teachers and school leaders continue to report that the Professional Educators Program (PEP) has changed specific human capital practices in the district during the 2015-16 school year, largely in the areas of professional development, leadership opportunities, and compensation. Teachers reported some improvements to professional development and school leaders were overwhelmingly positive in their assessment of professional development they received through their participation in PEP roles. While one-third to two-fifths of educators reported that new professional development was tailored to their specific needs, 67% of school leaders felt that it helped them be a better educator.

Third, educators perceive some connections between the district's evaluation systems and PEP, but these links could be strengthened. Forty-one percent of teachers surveyed reported that their PEP goals were related to TEVAL, while 66% of school leaders reported that this relationship existed with PEVAL. In interviews and survey open-response items, educators struggled to

identify explicit connections between PEP and evaluation or school improvement planning. Coordinating across these efforts in the coming year may pay off for the district and its schools.

Fourth, we found that the distribution of teacher roles across tiers is more equitable than in prior years. NHPS has made considerable progress in each year of the grant in this regard. That said, teachers with districtwide positions occupy a disproportionate number of roles.

Sixth, as with prior years, educators reported that the roles created through PEP were, in their view, improving educator practice, collaboration, and student performance. Almost all-- 97% of curriculum facilitators and 93% of teacher facilitators—responded that PEP roles had increased their opportunities to collaborate with other teachers. These roles are intended to improve classroom practice. When asked whether this has occurred, 83% of teachers survey agreed/strongly agreed with this statement, including 93% of teacher facilitators and 90% of curriculum facilitators. School leaders in expanded roles report that their professional learning for the roles has improved their instructional leadership. Lastly, 92% of all teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the roles affected student achievement. Almost all-- 99% of student support facilitators, 92% of teacher facilitators, and 98% of super tutors—reported this positive outcome.

Based on these findings, we recommend the following:

1. **Continue to support the expanded roles in New Haven Public Schools.** Teachers and school leaders report extensive benefits of the role in terms of their collaboration, instructional or leadership practice, and student learning. School leaders in expanded roles report high levels of satisfaction with their communities of practice, in which they learn a great deal and deepen their connections with colleagues.
2. **Make the assignments of roles much earlier:** We are finding that it has taken quite a while for roles to begin to fully function. It would be ideal to assign roles as early as possible so that people in the roles can implement them immediately and supervisors can support them accordingly. This is especially important for roles, including mentor, coach, and teacher facilitator, that involve working with other colleagues. By assigning these roles early, role holders are provided the time to set up the role and establish relationships with colleagues who are central to the roles.
3. **Consider the organizational/individual balance for each role:** The roles in New Haven appear to walk a fine balance between serving organizational goals and individual needs. This tension has become evident in the case of Network Facilitators, for example. It would be helpful to consider this balance before the next year of PEP launches. How should each role serve individual needs? How should it serve organizational needs? It is reasonable to expect that roles should do both and making this balance more explicit at the outset may reduce tensions as teachers and administrators engage further with the roles.
4. **Consider making expectations for support for role more explicit:** Many PEP roles require administrator support to function effectively. This is true for both teacher roles

and administrator roles. Consider making the district's expectations regarding administrator support for these roles more explicit. As shown in the data and our case study in particular, sites where administrators actively support and integrate PEP roles appear to derive more benefits from them.

## **Introduction**

This study seeks to understand how the New Haven Public Schools (NHPS) is implementing a major initiative to reform human capital management, or the ways in which it attracts, develops, evaluates, and rewards its personnel. Human capital management is “the ‘people side’ of education reform,” (Strategic Management of Human Capital, 2009, p. 1). This represents a shift in focus from “curriculum and assessment to teacher and administrator recruitment, retention and compensation” (Strategic Management of Human Capital, 2009, p. 1). NHPS has received a Teacher Incentive Fund IV from the U.S. Department of Education to build its human capital system as outlined in its proposed Professional Educator Program (PEP). The theory of action underlying PEP is that aligning teacher and school leader recruitment, hiring, professional development, and evaluation to a larger, unified vision of teaching and learning will enhance student performance. New Haven is one of first urban districts to implement a coordinated approach to developing human capital.

Our study examines whether PEP has changed NHPS personnel practices, how and why such changes occurred, and the effects of these changes on educator practice and student performance. This report documents NHPS’s progress related to PEP during the 2014-15 school year. It is the third annual report completed by the research team at the request of the New Haven Public Schools.

## **Methods**

As in years past, our study followed a mixed methods research design to understand educators’ views on the implementation of PEP, their experiences with PEP, and early evidence on how PEP may be shaping educators’ practices and students’ opportunities to learn in schools. Between September 2015 and June 2016, we collected qualitative and quantitative data describing the implementation of new human capital practices (PEP) within the New Haven Public Schools.

We examined three research questions related to policy implementation, educator experiences and policy outcomes:

### **PEP Policy Implementation**

- 1. Have NHPS’s human capital practices changed relative to before PEP was implemented?*
  - a. To what degree does educator evaluation affect educators’ practice?*
  - b. To what degree is educator effectiveness considered in human capital decisions?*
  - c. To what degree have human capital practices provided targeted support to high-need schools?*

### **Educator Experiences with PEP**

- 2. How do educators view specific changes to NHPS’s human capital practices?*

### **PEP Policy Outcomes**

- 3. Did student performance improve after PEP implementation?*

## **Sample**

To gain an understanding of how PEP was implemented in NHPS, we selected a sample including educators at the district and school level. These included district leaders, principals,

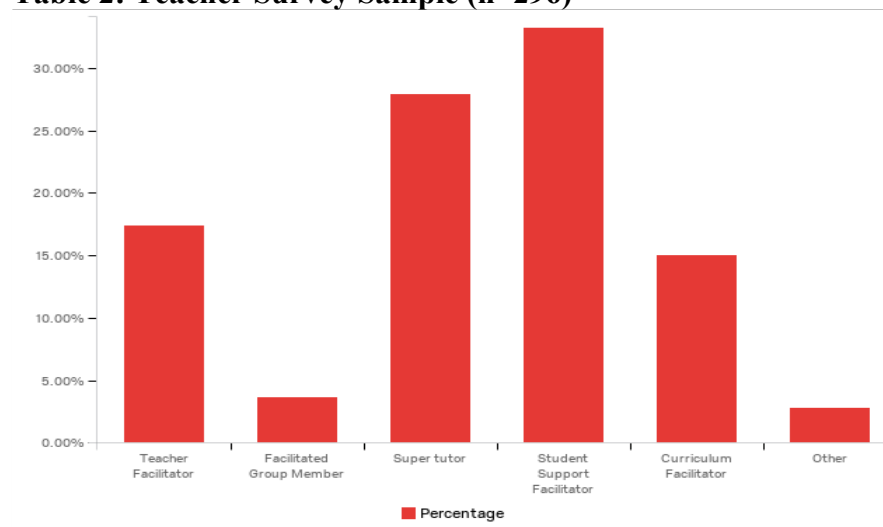
and teachers. We interviewed four district leaders over the course of the 2015-16 school year. These leaders were selected because of their key roles in human capital development within the New Haven Public Schools. We held 31 interviews with school leaders during 2015-16. Leaders held different expanded roles in the PEP initiative. We also interviewed 27 teachers who held PEP roles in 2015-16. These teachers came from a range of schools with differing levels of involvement in PEP.

We also were participant observers in 11 meetings related to the PEP implementation. These included 10 professional development sessions for principals in expanded roles and one Talent Council meeting.

<b>Table 1: Interview Sample, 2015-16</b>	
<b><i>Role</i></b>	<b><i>Number of Interviews</i></b>
<b>District Leaders</b>	4
<b>Network Facilitators</b>	10
<b>Coaches</b>	13
<b>Mentors</b>	3
<b>Mentees</b>	5
<b>School leaders without PEP role</b>	1
<b>Teacher Facilitators</b>	4
<b>Curriculum Facilitators</b>	9
<b>Student Support Facilitators</b>	8
<b>Super Tutors</b>	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>

In addition, we invited all teachers and school leaders holding expanded roles to participate in a survey in June 2016. In all, 296 teachers responded to the teacher survey. Response rates were lower than for the 2013-14 survey, but still represent a sizeable portion of the overall population of teachers holding roles. Based on a fall 2015 count of 608 teachers in expanded roles, this represents a 49% response rate. This rate is higher than that for 2015 and likely lower than the actual response rate given that district supervisors for roles report some attrition between the fall 2015 count and the June 2016 survey. Table 2 shows the composition of the sample of teachers who responded to the survey.

**Table 2: Teacher Survey Sample (n=296)**



We also administered a survey to principals and assistant principals holding expanded roles. Forty-five administrators holding roles or interacting with those in roles (e.g. mentees) responded to this survey, for a response rate of 79%.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and surveys. Questions were tailored to address the four major research questions outlined above. Interviews were transcribed and coded using Dedoose qualitative software. Survey data were collected using Qualtrics. Data were analyzed using basic descriptive techniques.

## **Findings**

Here, we lay out findings based on the interviews, surveys, and observations we completed in the 2015-16 school year. We begin with a case of role implementation in one school, which paints a rich picture of how school context and the principal's approach to teachers' roles can affect their success and impact. We then turn to the research questions, providing quantitative and qualitative evidence from teachers and school leaders to answer each one.

### **A Case Study of Role Implementation in One School**

PEP roles have been implemented in schools across the district. What do they look like when implemented in a coordinated fashion? Based on interviews with teachers and the principals in one New Haven school, we present a case study of implementation in one site.

We first asked NHPS central office administrators to recommend sites where PEP roles appeared to be coordinated. In these sites, the principal or some other coordinator created coherence and communicated the purpose and reach of the roles within the school. We recruited schools and were able to secure participation from administrators and teachers at one site, which we call Green School. Green is a school of approximately 500 students, the majority of whom are Latino

with a sizeable ELL population. Teachers at Green work in all four PEP roles. There are seven Curriculum Facilitators (CF), five Teacher Facilitators (TF), two Student Support Facilitators (SSF), and two Super Tutors (ST).

**School Culture and Structure Support Teacher Leadership.**<sup>2</sup> Teachers and administrators described a school culture that fostered a sense of community and distributed leadership to teachers. A super tutor described Green School as a “little United Nations” and “a private school where Latino parents can send their kids.” The teachers recognized the value the Latino majority brings, even viewing their work as one of creating a caring culture. One teacher facilitator went as far as describing the school as one that is trying to build the following: “we’ve worked very hard to create a culture of family...because we have to overcome the challenges in some way.” Referring to a culture of family is one way that the school ties its diverse, Latino majority population together. Through the eyes of the teacher facilitator, this is an integral part of how the culture of the school has helped support student success.

The teachers also reported that administrators regularly recognized their successes and assisted them in doing their best work. “...Coming here it’s so much more supportive. You feel appreciated here.” The teacher facilitator quoted also noted that she sometimes receives handwritten cards for completing jobs in the school that are above and beyond the assigned duties. This viewpoint was mirrored by the principal, who described the school’s commitment to a shared leadership model. “...So at the school, you know, we really value teacher leadership and it’s been part of our shared leadership model to really emulate, you know, good leadership practices and to be able to develop and, you know, help people to grow along the continuum.” Teachers and administrators consistently reported that appreciation, respect, trust, and collaboration characterize the school culture.

In part, this environment seems to have grown out of the school’s School Improvement (SI) Grant. Under the grant, the school started to hold daily meetings for teachers to improve collaboration and curriculum. The meetings occur each morning at 8:00 AM, one hour before classes begin. The morning collaboration, focused at first on vertical curriculum alignment and then TF-led groups, has helped the school emerge from turnaround status.

Although the turnaround story is vital, perhaps the most important part of Green’s story is the development of a shared leadership model. Despite a curriculum facilitator noting that the population is extremely “transient...[in terms of] both students and staff”, there are examples that the shared leadership model places care and trust in the teachers to drive the school’s improvement. The SI grant led to a school design that increased collaborative planning time for vertical teaming. Originally, these teams focused on aligning curriculum and instruction vertically within the school. However, since the new roles for PEP have been introduced, Green has expanded the work of teacher leaders. Each morning meeting now features teacher facilitator-led learning. Administrators require teachers to participate in the teacher facilitator

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<sup>2</sup> Beginning in the middle of January, teachers were scheduled for interviews. Four semi-structured interviews were completed between the middle of January and the beginning of March. Additionally, the principal was interviewed in early May to triangulate information presented in the teacher interviews. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Following coding, themes were evaluated and discussed for each individual case study.



groups - a mandate that teachers appear to support. The principal reported that the groups focus on “classroom management, student engagement” and teacher facilitators reported focusing on specific strands of pedagogy, student social and emotional needs, and instructional practice. The collaborative meeting time conveys that the principal values teachers and their leadership. “We value teacher leadership and it’s been part of our shared leadership model,” said one teacher.

**Logistics of the PEP Roles at Green School.** We found that the coordination of the roles had implications for their functioning.

**Basics of CF.** The CFs at Green, like at all schools, were organized by central office Curriculum Supervisors for each content area. At Green, however, most CFs were teachers in one subject area. This was not intentional. Because of the concentration of CFs in one subject area, they were able to work together to extend and enrich curriculum development at the school site. The principal noted the extension of the work saying, “we [CF’s] continued the work and so we’ve been working with the [local museum] and the teachers have been working collaboratively designing units and rolling [it] out.” The principal stayed apprised of the progress the CFs were making, offering advice and guidance. However, the principal maintained a distance from the day-to-day work, leaving that to the CFs.

**Basics of TF.** As discussed above, the TF role at Green is integrated into the school more fully than other roles at Green or elsewhere. The principal has granted TFs the time and space to conduct their work. Dedicating time every Friday morning for the TFs to facilitate their colleagues creates the structure for the role to happen. The compulsory nature of the roles facilitates their success. All participants interviewed (including TFs, STs, principal) commented that the TF meeting time was valuable.

**Basics of ST.** One super tutor (ST) at Green worked with the lower grades and one served the upper grades. The principal was aware that the lower grade level teacher was focused on young readers improving their skills in response to a district-wide initiative on this topic. The principal knew about the work happening and checked the data from the ST consistently. The upper grade teacher focused on building a drama club because she perceived students’ communication skills to be weak. She reported that the principal strongly supported her work. It is clear that the principal views her work related to STs, like all other roles, as supporting the teacher and identifying ways to build upon and improve the role.

**Basics of SSF.** The student support facilitator (SSF) role at Green functions through the School-Parent Management Team (SPMT), which is a collaborative governance committee. The principal reported that the two teachers who are SSFs also held other leadership roles in the building; one was the school culture leader and the other was an academic leader. The result is that both teachers are aware of the strategic goals in the school improvement plan and can tailor their SSF work to reinforce their work in other roles.

**Coordination of the Roles: What Did it Look Like?** At Green, the coordination of the roles in the context of a larger commitment to shared leadership at the school appeared to facilitate the roles’ success. A shared leadership model allowed PEP role holders to have autonomy in their day-to-day work while also sharing progress with administrators, which allowed them to hold

teachers accountable. The evidence indicates that the shared leadership model is an important part of empowering PEP teacher leaders.

***Professional autonomy with support accountability.*** The Green teachers who held PEP leadership positions experienced professional autonomy with accountability. The autonomy for teachers manifested itself in the following ways: (a) teachers were free to make day-to-day decisions about the implementation of the role they held; and (b) teachers experienced less compliance accountability than in other sites. Instead of emphasizing accountability, administrators focused on providing timely support for teachers to lead the school, including determining how to lead through the PEP role.

***Day-to-day autonomy.*** Teachers in the TF and ST role reported control over the decisions they make in their role. One TF noted that the district training provided her with protocols: “We were given a list of protocols that we can use. We don't have to stick with just one. We can pick and choose as whatever works best for the group that you’re working with.” While the training focused on teaching TFs how to facilitate meetings, the choice of how to run those meetings at the school level was left to them. TFs also experienced autonomy in the composition of their groups as a whole and in individual meetings. One TF noted how administrators needed to gain permission to join any group meeting. “They [administrators] don't come in unless, I mean if they want to they would have to ask me and get the permission to come in.” The autonomy of the TF role suggests that the principal respected the boundaries of their daily work. Rather than micromanaging the day-to-day decision-making of TFs, the principal trusted that important work was happening during these meetings. To keep tabs on this work, the principal had monthly meetings in which TFs and the principal discussed their successes and challenges.

STs also reported that they determined the course of their work. In particular, one ST reported experiencing substantial latitude in designing work for students in her group. “So, of course I’m doing drama...because our kids, especially at the adolescent, middle school age they don't have drama classes. They don't have performances...that’s one of the things I miss because many years ago all the schools had to produce a play, middle school...and the middle school kids are forgotten, the 6-8. They have no room....So, I thought by getting in the Super Tutor program I could really do some creative things, the drama program, set my own hours.” The evidence points to the ST feeling empowered to find ways to teach students different skills that could help their performance.

Ultimately, day-to-day decisions resided with the teacher leaders. The principal maintained knowledge about these decisions by holding regular meetings with the TFs. At first, these meetings seem to be accountability oriented, according to teachers and principal. However, the principal clarified this indicating these meetings were support-oriented:

So, then as time evolved, we noticed that the teacher leaders had much more under their belt. They knew how to facilitate meetings. They knew how to deal with maybe difficult conversations within a group setting, so the -- you saw -- you saw that their skill set was - - was really improving so then we started to scale back and not have those meetings as often. We went to twice a month. Then, we would only have it once a month because they don’t really need it and the time that we do meet with teacher -- the vertical team leaders, the leadership team meets with them and it's a time for them to kind of talk a

little bit about their action plans, talk about the work they've been doing, talk about some of their strengths and some of their challenges and also to see how we can support them in anyway.

In this example, the principal described reducing the frequency of meetings as TFs demonstrated increasing skill in facilitation. The principal shifted her focus to support as opposed to oversight. As the meetings' focus shifted, teachers in the PEP roles maintained autonomy, but also were able to be transparent about their work and how they needed support to improve.

Similarly teachers not in PEP roles experienced autonomy in relation to their involvement with the roles. Specifically, TFs noted that teachers in the school chose which TF group they joined. The principal also noted that the TFs helped her think about engagement at the school-level and figure out which teachers to engage better. Overall, this focus on teacher buy-in helped unleash the power of a coordinated effort.

***Lessened compliance accountability.*** Administrators have used bureaucracy to support the PEP roles at Green. In doing so, the bureaucracy has developed over time to support teachers in leadership roles rather than demand that they comply with school-wide needs. For example, the principal spent much of her time discussing how she had created the structures to support the leadership model of the school. The principal said “we really value teacher leadership and it's been part of our shared leadership model to really emulate, you know, good leadership practices and to be able to develop and, you know, help people to grow along the continuum.” This was echoed when a CF representative noted that the principal tried to make decisions from the “bottom up as much as possible but top down as much as necessary.” Each of the quotes indicates that people in charge wanted to include teachers in making school-wide decisions. A by-product of this form of thinking is less expectation that compliance to one administrator's expectations will enhance student and teacher performance.

One specific way that the school has lessened compliance-oriented accountability is enhancing communication and transparency reporting. Meetings are one place that communication has helped the school move from compliance-oriented accountability. The principal and a TF reported that meetings involved data-based discussions about what could be done to improve learning for students. The TF noted, “we do meet once a month with the administrators just to give feedback on how things are working. Any concerns we do share.” Another TF added, “and just offering her [principal] support...I mean just to be there, just to hear us, and ask how we're doing.” This is corroborated by the principal who reported that these meetings were opportunities to share useful information to lessen the barriers to the work: “It's basically a meeting for them -- for me to kind of listen to them to see what's working and what's not and how I can help them.” In fact, all teachers interviewed reported access to the principal to discuss their work in the roles. This was evident as the principal discussed the specifics of how each role was operating in the school.

**The Consequences of Coordinating PEP Roles Within a School.** Green School reflects a coordinated effort on the part of teachers and leaders to develop teacher leadership that empowers teachers to collaborate, communicate, and offer their wisdom to improve the school.

In addition, this case suggests that coordination can shift role oversight from compliance-oriented to support-oriented accountability, prompt deeper implementation of PEP roles and affect student performance.

***Improved Collaboration.*** A schoolwide commitment to collaboration, both in terms of time in which to partner and in terms of inculcating a norm of working together, facilitated the success of the PEP roles. Teachers seized on collaboration as a way to learn, support, and build team within their ranks. One TF noted that her facilitated group does just that saying, “it’s not like I’m standing over teachers and telling them what to do. It’s kind of like a group teamwork that we do. We -- I throw back ideas, questions. We do a lot of problem solving with each other. That’s kind of like the gist. That’s where my group looks like.” This allowed the group to work with each other to improve their practice and learning about practice.

The school also developed the TF role through collaboration. One of the current members of the central office Talent Team was a teacher at the school prior to being appointed to the districtwide position. She convinced administrators to use their Friday meeting time for TF work. The TF role thus became coordinated at the school-level. One TF organizes the work at the beginning of the year, ensuring that each group picks different topics. Once this is done, the TF coordinator also helps assign teachers to groups based on their preferences.

Similarly, CFs also have collaborated to create curriculum, bringing improved opportunities for students to the school by developing partnerships. Additionally, the principal is collaborating with all roles, holding monthly meetings to find out about the work and how to support it. Thus, the coordination of PEP roles has facilitated teacher collaboration within the school.

***Improved Communication.*** A second consequence of The PEP roles is increased and enhanced communication between teachers and administrators. Regular meetings between the principal and PEP teachers has fostered clearer and more explicit lines of communication, allowing honest and transparent feedback between different constituencies in the school. For instance, the teachers in three of the PEP roles reported that they had regular meetings with the principal, where the principal was seeking to understand their work and how to support them. Some of this communication was not positive, but it allowed each leader to understand another perspective.

***Oversight as support.*** The administrator’s perspective about the role of meeting time supports a shift from meetings being bureaucratic structures for compliance to bureaucratic structures of support. The principal noted that the purpose of meetings has moved away from reporting about the work being done by teacher leaders (PEP roles and vertical team) towards a tenor of problem solving and support for teacher leaders. No teacher leader indicated that the administrators were not interested and involved in ensuring they were successful with their work. Each teacher in a PEP role who was interviewed made it clear that the principal was involved in supporting the work. This increased teacher buy-in, communication, and collaboration, both within their ranks as well as between teachers and administrators.

***Deeper implementation of PEP roles.*** When teachers are empowered through a shared leadership model, such as that at Green School, the roles appeared to be implemented a deeper

level and have greater influence schoolwide. The TFs gained daily meeting time because one TF became a central coordinator of making it a school-wide initiative. The CFs were able to extend their work at the district-level to work together to improve programming at the school level. The SSFs utilized pre-existing organizational structures to extend and promote their work. The STs built on a district initiative or identified curriculum gap to offer more learning opportunities for students. Each of these successes is noteworthy, not because it happened, but because of the ease with which it happened. Each role was clearly understood, both by people in the PEP roles and the administrators. This stands in contrast to other sites where principals and PEP teacher leaders hold differing views of the roles and their purpose.

The evidence also indicates that the shared leadership model allowed the principal to coordinate the roles relatively easily. The principal and other leaders appeared to listen to their teachers and prioritize transparency. Through their actions, they also showed that they believed that the teachers have answers on how to improve student achievement. The PEP roles were strongly supported by administrators, both publicly and in one-on-one interactions with PEP role holders. PEP role holders in the school appear to believe in the PEP roles as do administrators. Non-TF PEP role holders professed support of TF groups, giving some evidence that school-wide support of the TF was present. This positive support for the roles helped them become integrated into the fabric of the school and facilitated their impact.

***Teaching and Learning.*** The compulsory nature of the TF role in Green offered learning opportunities that would not exist otherwise. One TF noted that as a special education teacher there are always worries that regular education teachers do not understand some of the ways that students need curriculum and instructional support. “I think we have, again with discussing different disabilities has opened the teachers’ eyes, you know how to work with specific students.” The evidence suggests that the teachers in this group learned new perspectives that will enhance their teaching. Teachers also attempted to fill instructional gaps in the curriculum. The ST interviewed created a Drama Club because students’ oral expression skills needed refinement. The other ST in the school, as noted by the principal, worked on connecting a district-wide reading initiative to early grade reading instruction. Both teachers and the CFs in the school clearly were specifically working to address curriculum gaps and improve opportunities for students.

The principal seems to resoundingly support the idea that work in the PEP roles improved student performance, with the carefully coordinated effort at Green.

“Interviewer (I): Do you think the roles are working?

Principal (P): Oh my God! Absolutely!

I: So, why do you think that is?

P: I mean, our -- our achievement scores -- I mean, we are above the district average in a lot of different areas right now even without state testing and everything. We are the only school that made it out of -- out of turnaround status, so that's huge.

I: Yeah. Definitely.

P: You know, we've been seeing a lot of indicators that show positive. Even like our attendance is not as low as -- we don't have the chronic absenteeism that other schools have, you know? So, we -- we've -- we're improving in so many ways. Our kids want to be in school.”

While it cannot be stated that the PEP roles improved achievement, the evidence suggests that relationships exist between: (a) CF role and improved curriculum; and (b) the TF role, teacher buy-in, and engagement in practice, and the teachers' sense that they are supported in the school. While many things contribute to increases in student performance, improved curriculum and greater teacher engagement and learning likely play a central role in improving teacher and student performance.

### **Conclusion**

This case demonstrates how coordination of the PEP roles enhances their integration and impact at the school level. It surfaces the key role of school context and the way in which school culture and structure can play a symbiotic role with PEP positions. School culture and structure can facilitate PEP roles' success and PEP roles can advance school norms of collaboration and communication. In this way we see how school context and the principal's approach to the roles can play a pivotal role in shaping the roles' success and impact in the school.

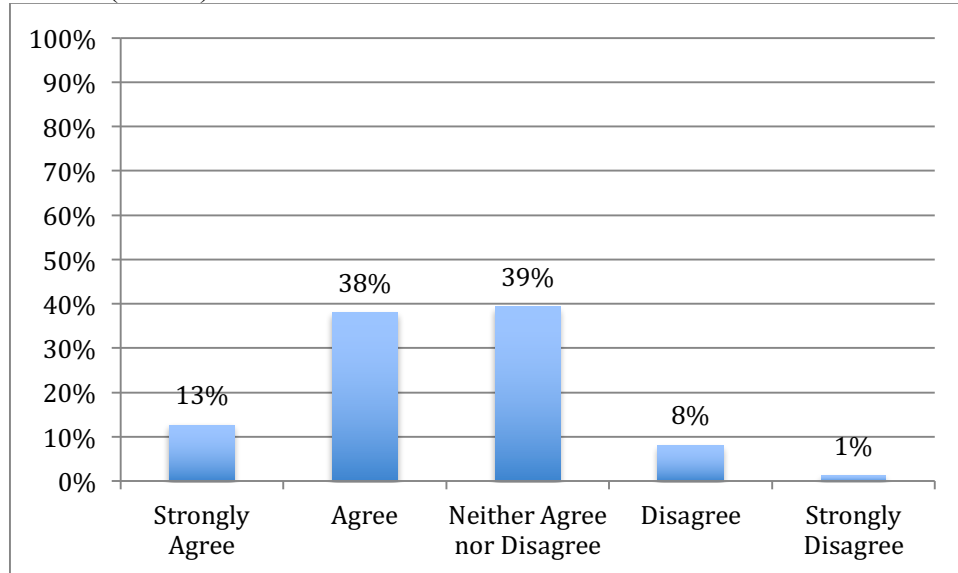
### **Research question 1: have NHPS's human capital practices changed relative to before pep was implemented?**

One major purpose of the Teacher Incentive Fund grant is to fund the transformation of NHPS's human capital functions with educator effectiveness at the center. Thus, we examined whether key human capital functions in the district changed over the past school year.

**Teacher Perspectives.** Teachers report some changes in the district's approaches to leadership opportunities and professional development. Over half of teachers surveyed reported that such opportunities changed in the past year. While high, these numbers represent a decline from 2014-15 percentages. This decline may reflect the maturation of the reform (i.e. fewer newer opportunities are starting) or a change in composition of the sample.

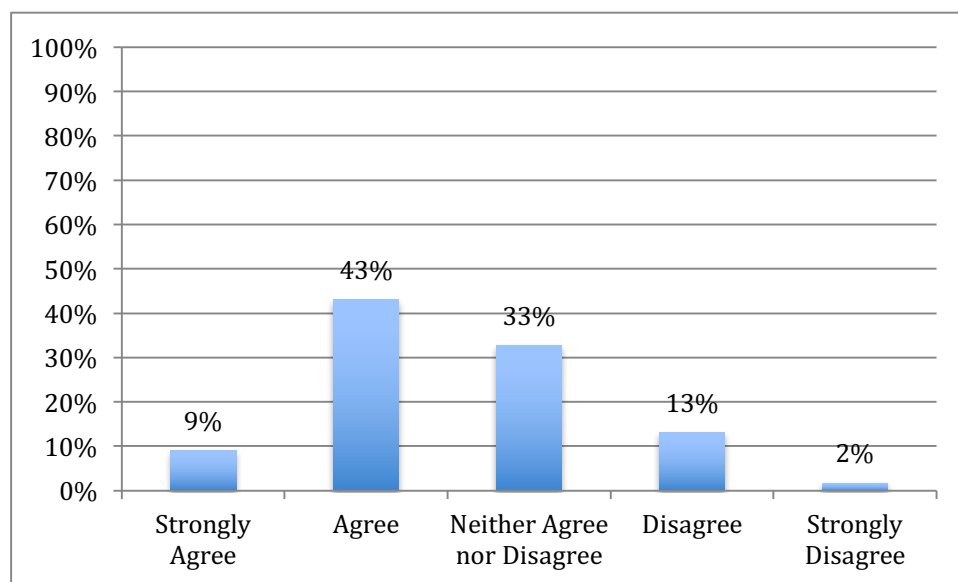
As shown below, 51% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that there were changes in leadership opportunities for teachers in 2015-16 in New Haven. This is a decline from 2014-15, when 59% agreed/strongly agreed with this statement.

Figure 1 - There have been changes in leadership opportunities for teachers this year in the NHPS. (n=225)



Over 50% of teachers reported changes to professional development in the past year (Figure 2)s. Again a lower percentage of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that there were changes in professional development in NHPS in 2015-16. Fifty-two percent agreed/strongly agreed with this statement in this past year, whereas 61% agreed/strongly agreed the previous year.

Figure 2 - There have been changes in professional development in the NHPS this year. (n=224)



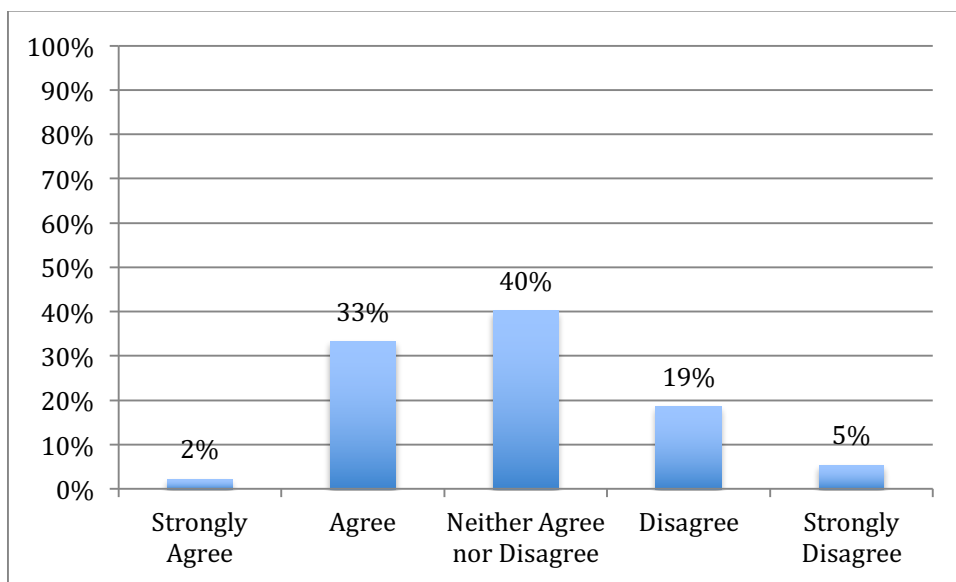
What did these changes look like? In interviews, teachers articulated that professional

development in 2015-16 was “more teacher led.” Another teacher said, “Our staff development was more focused and relevant this year.” Finally, teachers summarized the main differences between professional development this year and in years past, as in the words of one teacher:

I do not notice differences in PD opportunities from previous years, with exception of our school empowering more teachers to lead our own school-based PDs. CIAs have also felt more useful starting last year, with greater time for collaboration.

Although a majority of teachers reported that there had been changes to professional development in the district, only about one-third reported that learning opportunities had targeted their own professional needs. In response to an item asking whether changes in professional development have been tailored to their specific needs, 35% of teachers surveyed agreed/strongly agreed. This figure was consistent with prior years.

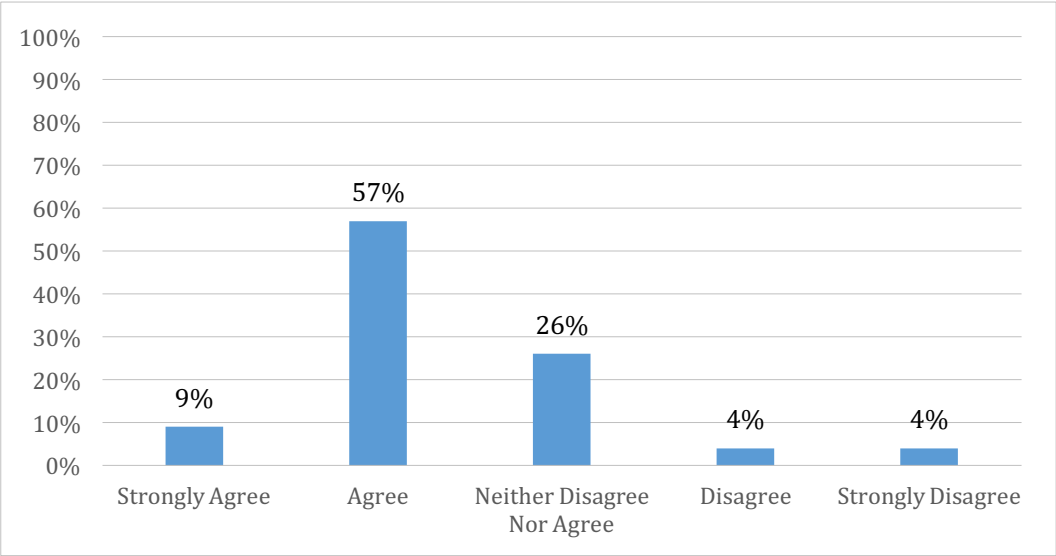
Figure 3 - The changes in professional development have been tailored to my specific needs



**School Leader Perspectives.** As in prior years, there was a varied set of perspectives among school leaders about whether human capital practices have changed as a result of PEP. Two thirds of the school leaders who responded to the survey agreed (57%) or strongly agreed (9%) that there have been changes in leadership opportunities for school leaders this year in the New Haven Public Schools. While few school leaders disagreed (4%) or strongly disagreed (4%), a quarter of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (26%). Overall, the balance of responses suggests that most school leaders believe that human capital practices have continued to shift as PEP was implemented for the third year.



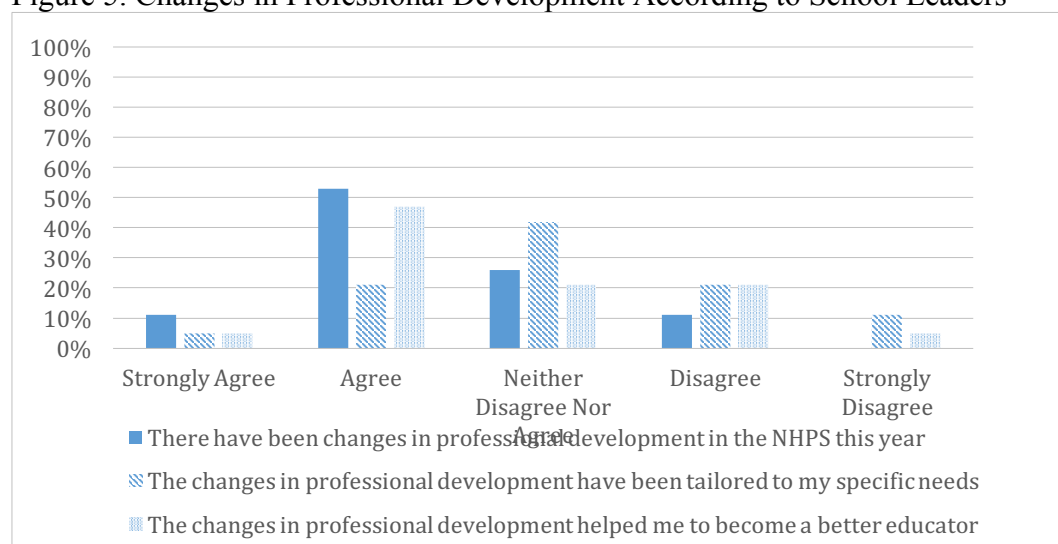
Figure 4. There have been changes in leadership opportunities for school leaders this year in the NHPS.



**Professional Development.** As in prior years, there was unanimous positive feedback on the quality and effectiveness of changes in the professional development provided to school leaders in expanded roles. The Communities of Practice led by Kerry Lord continue to receive widespread praise from all participating school leaders. School leaders directly benefiting from peer-led professional development through mentoring, coaching, or facilitated dialogue also saw these continued changes to professional development as beneficial. However, a number of school leaders raised questions about the extent to which professional development has shifted system-wide and long-term in the district.

The majority of school leaders who responded to the survey agreed (53%) or strongly agreed (11%) that there have been changes in professional development in the NHPS this year; only 11% disagreed and another 26% neither disagreed nor agreed.

Figure 5. Changes in Professional Development According to School Leaders



In interviews, school leaders in expanded roles described great changes in professional development - in large part because of their own opportunities to learn about the new roles. One Network Facilitator explained the value of the professional development provided in the Community of Practice. “For me, it’s always been about the research base in adult learning practice. There are certain things that we know works for adult learners and we forget that. And then teachers feel disrespected, like they’re not being treated like professionals.” Several others added how they have learned to be intentional and transparent in their strategic vision with teachers. As one school leader stated, “It’s very important to make sure we connect what we talk about to action for the next step. What’s the decision that comes out of the process? We can talk for hours, but then - so what?” Others connected this intentionality with the protocols they learned with Kerry Lord in their Communities of Practice.

Mentors and Coaches expressed similar positive experiences with the professional development they are receiving in their expanded role. School leaders in both roles continue to state the importance of learning how to ask questions to guide colleagues, rather than find solutions on their behalf. As one Mentor stated, “Understanding problem-solving without solving the problem is key to me. And learning how to ask prompting questions without leading them to tell someone what to do is important for me.” Another Mentor admitted that he struggles with listening, as he uses the time when his Mentee is speaking to think about the next question, rather than staying present with his Mentee. He and several others stated that they appreciate the opportunity to practice such skills in their professional development sessions. The ability to gather regularly to work on these skills over time was consistently noted as highly valuable by Mentors and Coaches alike.

School leaders in all three expanded roles acknowledged that this professional development was beneficial to their work beyond the expanded role, yet was not offered to all school leaders. One coach specifically compared her experience with very strong professional development to the dearth of high quality professional development for school leaders in the district who are not in the communities of practice supporting expanded roles. “As a teacher and coach I received the best professional development that any district could offer. As an administrator I do not feel I

have had the same amount of valuable opportunities. The community of practice that I joined was definitely a step in the right direction.” During a session with Kerry Lord, two coaches noted that it would have been incredibly useful to have had this training earlier in their careers. This echoes sentiments from previous years about the value of the changes to professional development offered to those in expanded roles.

School leaders who were not in official PEP roles but were mentored or coached by those in such positions also spoke positively about these professional development experiences. In a focus group of mentees, school leaders spoke about the value of this model of professional development in decreasing isolation and normalizing difficult tasks associated with school leadership roles. “It’s like, ‘oh right! I’m not walking through this myself!’ Like, ‘I’m not crazy,’ said one Mentee. Others agreed saying, “And just being able to hear someone who worked in that building for years and say, ‘Yeah, I know - that’s really normal.’” and “That’s right. ‘Am I doing something wrong?’” Another referred to her Mentor as a “think partner,” saying she appreciated having to where they “worked together and, like, strategized together about situations.” These descriptions were common in describing the professional development of working with Mentors and Coaches.

Feedback following the Superintendent’s Meeting that involved a dialogue led by Network Facilitators was similarly positive. Each Network Facilitator reported after the session that they had received positive feedback from their colleagues and several were asked if they would be providing additional facilitated dialogue in future meetings. The district collected feedback, as well, and reported that the session was the highest rated all year, with colleagues requesting more time in Superintendent’s Meetings facilitated by Network Facilitators. This speaks to the high quality of the professional development provided to school leaders in this role, as well as their ability to lead professional development for their colleagues.

The overwhelming majority of school leaders who reported changes to professional development also indicated that professional development helped them to improve their practice. As shown in Figure 5, almost three quarters of respondents who reported changes to professional development agreed (67%) or strongly agreed (8%) that the changes helped them to become a better educator; few school leaders disagreed (8%), strongly disagreed (8%), or remained neutral (8%). Network Facilitators spoke about the importance of the strategies and tools they learned in their Community of Practice for their own practice. Several have begun introducing the structured protocols within their own staff meetings and have experienced positive results. One school leader used a structured protocol to shift negative communications in a subset of teachers and another used them to help set up a new team structure. One Network Facilitator even suggested they use a Community of Practice meeting next year as a protocol vetting session with their lead teachers to expand the capacity building being provided to them.

However, not everyone felt that changes to professional development had been consistent. As one Network Facilitator stated, “there was a lot of changes in the district and a lot of changes in the way professional development was given to us as administrators, right?...We had the opportunity to talk about problems of practice...and that was amazing. That was definitely amazing. But then, this year [we did not].” We summarize trends regarding the extent to which professional development practices have shifted through PEP by educator roles in Figure 5.

Of those who reported changes to professional development this year, 41% agreed (33%) or strongly agreed (8%) that the changes were tailored to their specific needs. A quarter of those who saw changes disagreed (17%) or strongly disagreed (8%) that they were tailored to their specific needs; a third neither disagreed nor agreed (33%). This suggests that the professional development provided in NHPS is not yet reaching the needs of the majority of school leaders.

One explanation for this may be that many Network Facilitators believed their professional development was aimed, at least in part, at sharing the superintendent and central office administrators' vision, rather than allowing them to define their own needs. This was not necessarily interpreted as an entirely negative experience. As one Network Facilitator shared, having a central office administrator join their Community of Practice provided them with "the opportunity to see another perspective...coming from the Talent Office. What are their goals?" She spoke about how Cora Muñoz served as a liaison between the Network Facilitators and the Directors in Central Office, which ultimately made them more effective at pitching their work to align with Central Office.

However, tension between serving the needs of central office and serving the needs of schools did emerge in several focus groups and interviews with school leaders. One Network Facilitator questioned whether the invitation to facilitate during Directors Meetings could be peer-driven, given the representation of central office interests at those meetings. "Coming from the perspective of the directors, you know, they do have an agenda, an agenda that is coming from the superintendent and the executive team, right?" Another described her frustration at being "all dressed up and no place to go!" Others indicated that they worry about putting their own reputations on the line if they do not have adequate time to plan for facilitating issues selected by the Superintendent or the Directors in central office meetings.

Ultimately, central office's decision to remove peer-led professional development from these spaces disrupted the ability of Network Facilitators to enact a consistent role. As one Network Facilitator shared, "I have to say in the beginning of the school year we were a little lost, because, you know, we did so many meetings last year...and [that ended], I don't know." While every Network Facilitator credited Kerry Lord and Cora Muñoz with guiding them in finding a new way to enact the role, they reported losing momentum and a substantial amount of time.

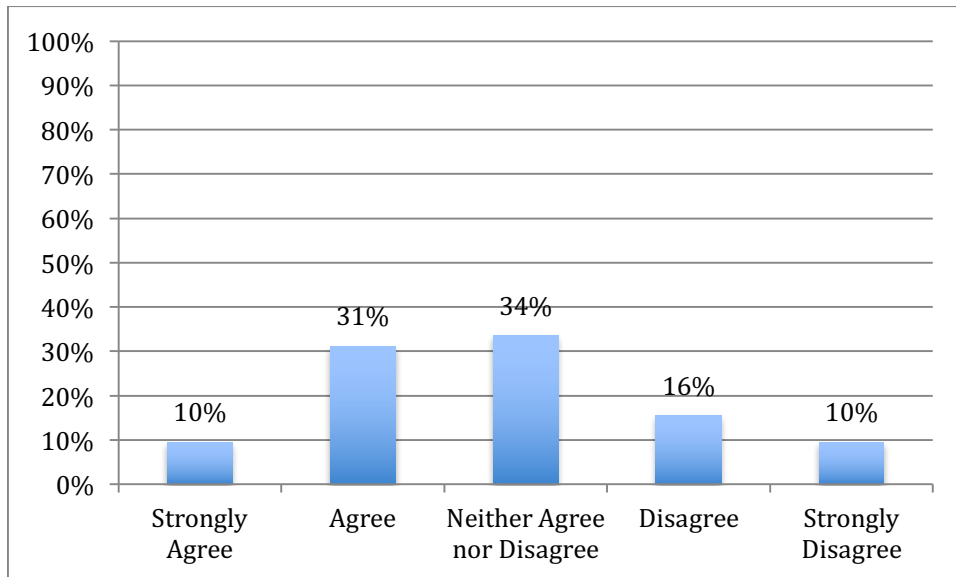
### **Research question 1a: To what degree does educator evaluation affect Educators' practice?**

We collected data on educators' experiences with TEVAL and PEVAL, as well as the extent to which they found educator evaluation to be integrated with PEP. As with results from 2013-14 and 2014-15, participants' views on the effects of educator evaluation on their practice varied.

**Teachers' Perspectives.** Although this evaluation is focused on PEP/TIF implementation, we asked a number of questions about the evaluation systems that rest at the heart of the district's reform: TEVAL and PEVAL.

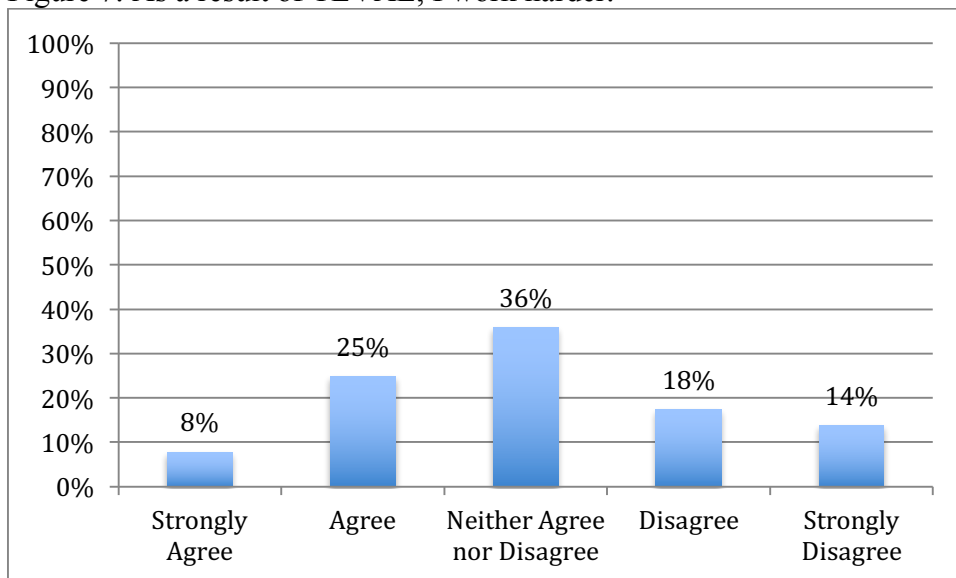
When asked whether TEVAL improved their instruction, almost half, 41%, of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. This is relatively consistent with 2014-15, when 45% agreed/strongly agreed.

Figure 6: TEVAL improves my instruction.



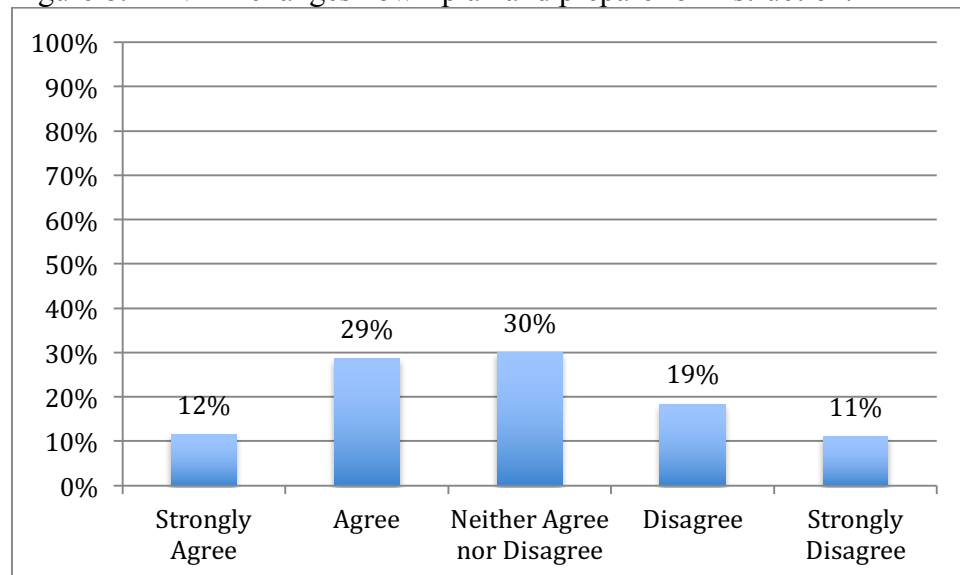
We also asked whether they worked harder as a result of TEVAL. In 2015-16, 33% of teachers reported that TEVAL prompted them to work harder. This is comparable to last year, when 37% agreed/strongly agreed with this statement.

Figure 7: As a result of TEVAL, I work harder.



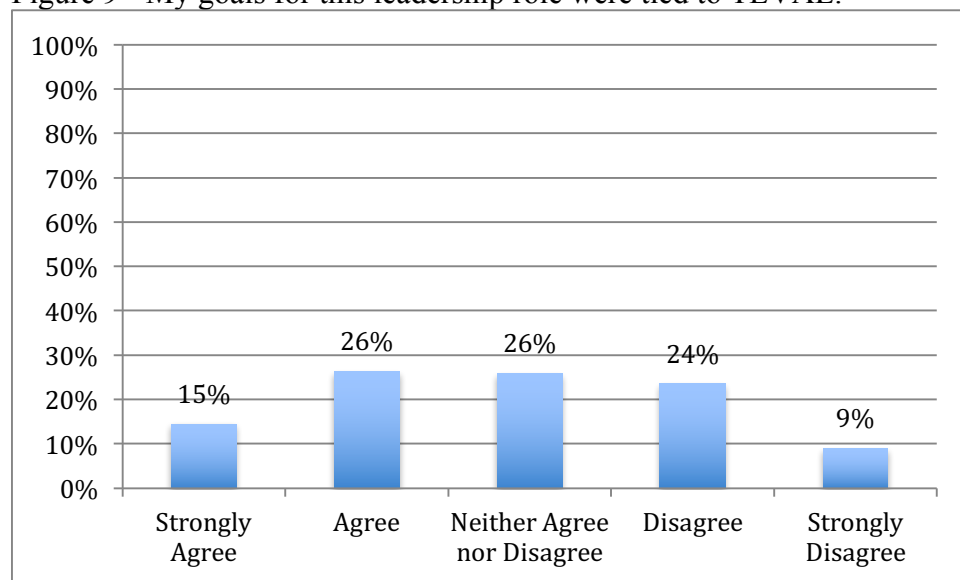
Slightly under half of all teachers reported that TEVAL changed how they planned and prepared for instruction. This again is consistent with prior years' results. In 2015-16, 41% agreed/strongly agreed with this statement compared to 44% last year.

Figure 8: TEVAL changes how I plan and prepare for instruction.



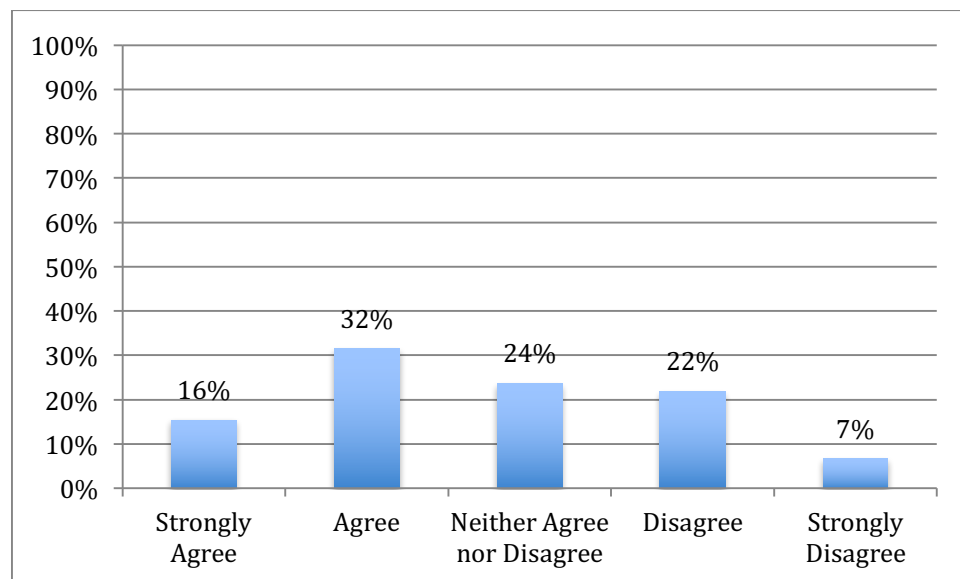
***TEVAL's Connection to PEP Roles.*** We also asked teachers about the extent to which they connected TEVAL to their PEP roles. Responses indicate that across different items, roughly half of the teachers surveyed said there was a link between TEVAL and their PEP role. For example, about 41% of teachers agreed/strongly agreed that their goals in the role were tied to TEVAL. This is a slight decline from last year, when 47% responded to the prompt in this way.

Figure 9 - My goals for this leadership role were tied to TEVAL.



Similarly, 48% of teachers surveyed agreed/strongly agreed that their TEVAL evaluation reflected their work in their leadership role. This is less than the 55% of teachers who reported this relationship in 2014-15.

Figure 10 - My TEVAL evaluation reflects my work in this leadership role.



In interviews, teachers did not usually connect their PEP role with TEVAL or with larger school improvement planning purposes. For example, one curriculum facilitator who had previously served as a Teacher Facilitator responded in this way to questions about TEVAL and her roles:

IN: ...your work as a curriculum facilitator, is that related to your T-Eval at all?

Teacher: No.

IN: No? No relationship?

VK: No.

IN: Not even in the – I forget which category it is, but the professional

VK: It's like professional – no.

IN: You have to make one goal. It's not related?

VK: No.

IN: And is your work as a curriculum facilitator related to your school's improvement plan in any way?

VK: No.

IN: No? And what about the other roles of student support facilitator or super tutor, teacher facilitator? Does that get incorporated in school improvement?

VK: I – when I was overseeing the teacher facilitators last year, I know that that was not included.

This disconnect between PEP roles, evaluation systems, and school improvement planning appears to be a key area where the district could be much more strategic about aligning initiatives for maximum benefit to schools and students.

**School Leaders' Perspectives.** We asked school leaders whether educator evaluation has changed while implementing PEP. Some school leaders stated that there have been changes to evaluation within the district, but did not connect those changes to PEP. A few school leaders connected their own expanded leadership roles to professional growth goals in their evaluations; several also encouraged their teachers with expanded roles to do the same.

When asked whether PEVAL influences their own practices, school leaders have varied responses. Of the school leaders who responded to the survey (both those in expanded leadership roles and those who are not), a larger percentage agreed (37%) or strongly agreed (21%) that PEVAL improves their work as a leader than the percentage who disagreed (11%) or strongly disagreed (5%) with this statement; 26% neither disagreed nor agreed. However, twice as many school leaders disagreed (21%) or strongly disagreed (21%) that they work harder as a result of PEVAL than agreed (11%) or strongly agreed (11%); 37% neither disagreed nor agreed. This suggests that PEVAL does not motivate the majority of school leaders to put more effort into their work but does, in their view, improve their leadership.

A substantial percentage of school leaders agreed (32%) or strongly agreed (11%) that PEVAL changes how they monitor teachers' progress in their school, suggesting one way that PEVAL seems to have changed practices in NHPS. A third of survey respondents either disagreed (21%) or strongly disagreed (11%) with this statement, which points to an uneven change across schools. Twenty six percent of school leaders neither disagreed nor agreed that they have changed how they monitor teachers' progress due to PEVAL.

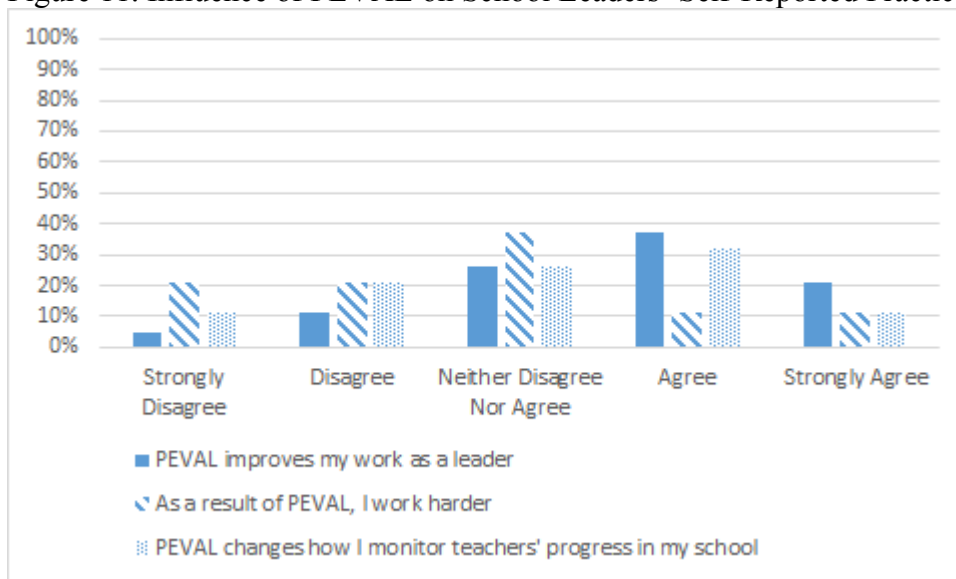
Several school leaders qualified their responses to whether PEVAL influences their practices by stating that they are fully committed to their leadership roles regardless of evaluation pressures or ratings. As one school leader responded,

I am intrinsically motivated and put 110% into my work for my students, staff and families. The PEVAL provides a frame, and I am satisfied with my high rating, but I would put forth the same amount of effort regardless of the evaluation system.

Another stated that PEVAL is inherently not systematic because "it is a highly individual process between two people." Some school leaders also qualified any connection as being indirect because their PEVAL is largely connected to student outcomes, rather than their work engaging in capacity building with educators.



Figure 11. Influence of PEVAL on School Leaders' Self-Reported Practices

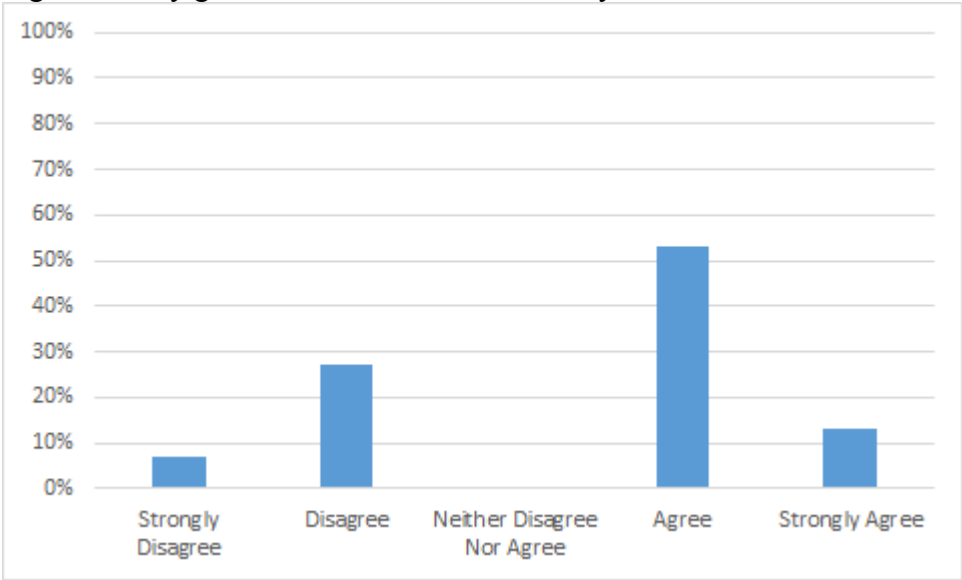


***PEVAL's Connection to PEP Roles.*** School leaders in expanded roles varied in the extent to which they connected their PEP roles to their evaluations. When asked whether their goals in the expanded role were tied to their PEVAL, two thirds of survey respondents agreed (53%) or strongly agreed (13%); a third disagreed (27%) or strongly disagreed (7%). One school leader explained why and how she connected her expanded leadership role through PEP to her evaluation.

Those PEVAL goals have to be linked to student growth, academic performance, and teachers' preparation, so both of my PEVAL goals are actually linked to teachers' goals in academic growth. In my professional growth, professional value, I actually added the Network Facilitator [role] as a way to improve my knowledge and, as a professional - because I think that whatever knowledge I'm acquiring through this, I'm going to transfer that into my practices as a leader in school.

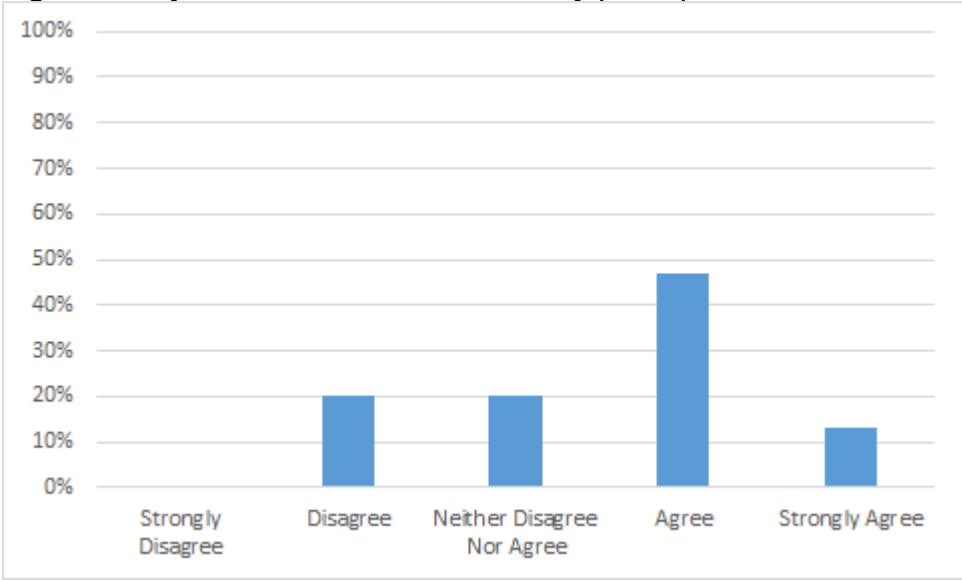
A few other school leaders in expanded roles spoke about how they could potentially include their work in communities of practice as part of their professional growth goals in future, but had to set goals before knowing what would be happening with the expanded roles this year.

Figure 12. My goals in this role were tied to my PEVAL



There was a similar divide among survey respondents concerning the extent to which their PEVAL reflects participation in expanded leadership roles. While 60% agreed (47%) or strongly agreed (13%) that their participation was reflected in their PEVAL, 20% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 20% disagreed. Together, these data suggest that many school leaders have seen changes in how their PEVAL is connected to new leadership roles and practices in the district; however, a meaningful subset of school leaders have not seen these changes.

Figure 13. My PEVAL evaluation reflects my participation in this role

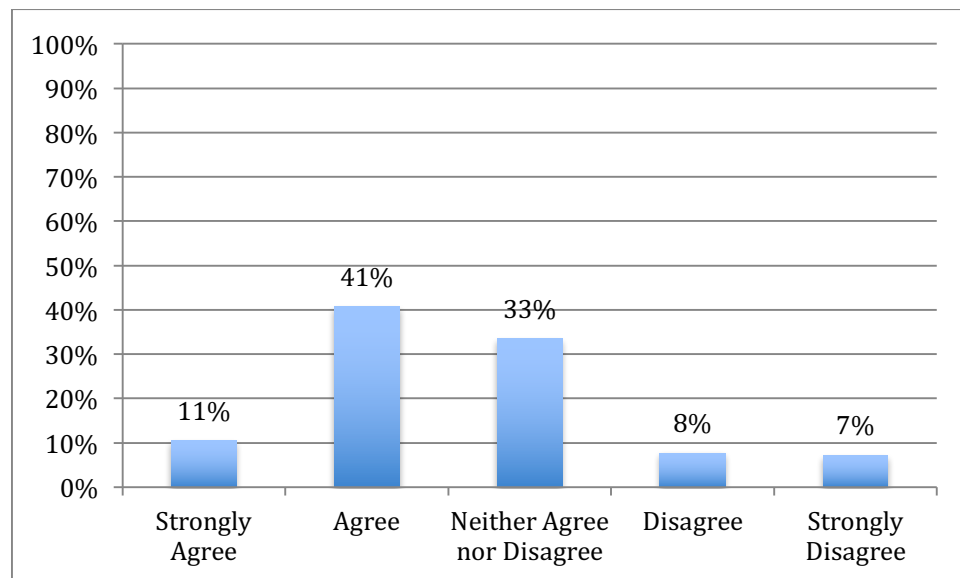


### Research question 1b: to what degree is educator effectiveness considered in human capital decisions?

We also inquired into the extent to which educator effectiveness is considered in human capital decisions. Educators' evaluation ratings on TEVAL and PEVAL play a role in their selection for expanded leadership roles. We gathered data on educators' awareness of this aspect of the program.

**Teachers' Perspectives.** We found that 52% agreed/strongly agreed educator effectiveness is a primary factor in deciding which teachers are offered leadership opportunities. In interviews, teachers noted that they qualified for these roles based on their TEVAL ratings, and thus educator effectiveness was central to their access to such opportunities. This figure is consistent with previous years' results (54% of teachers agreed/strongly agreed in 2014-15.)

Figure 14 - Educator effectiveness is a primary factor in deciding which teachers are offered leadership opportunities.

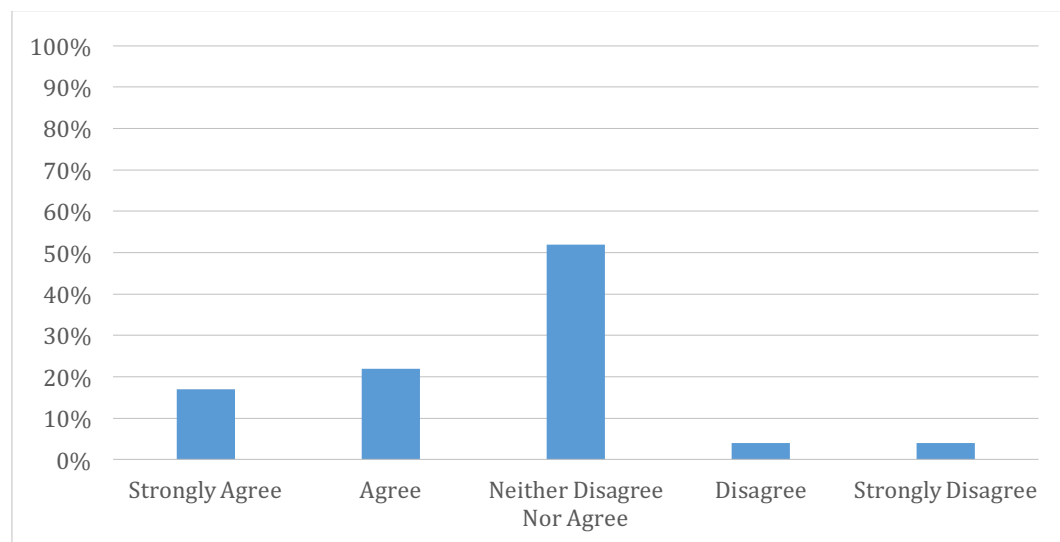


**School Leaders' Perspectives.** As in prior years of PEP implementation, school leaders reported a variety of influences over human capital decisions, including various beliefs about the role educator effectiveness plays.

In regards to their own selection for expanded leadership roles, many of the school leaders who responded to the survey did not believe that educator effectiveness played a large role in decisions. Forty percent of school leaders either agreed (22%) or strongly agreed (17%) that educator effectiveness is a primary factor in deciding which school leaders are offered new leadership opportunities; 52% neither agreed nor disagreed; and 8% either disagreed (4%) or strongly disagreed (4%). This is verified by interview and focus group data: the majority of school leaders reported that they volunteered and that self-selection was the primary influence on who became Mentors, Coaches, and Network Facilitators. When probed for more information,

several school leaders mentioned that someone in central office or Kerry Lord encouraged them to continue serving in an expanded role, join the expanded roles, or switch from being a Mentor to serving as a Coach (or vice versa). However, no one was sure why these changes were suggested or how encouragement was connected to their own individual skills.

Figure 15. Educator effectiveness as a primary factor in deciding which school leaders are offered new leadership opportunities



The survey also asked the extent to which respondents believe that some school leaders who were selected for these leadership roles are not the strongest school leaders. Few school leaders disagreed (4%) or strongly disagreed (13%) and several agreed (26%) or strongly agreed (13%) that those chosen for expanded roles are not the strongest school leaders. Forty three percent neither disagreed nor agreed (figure not shown).

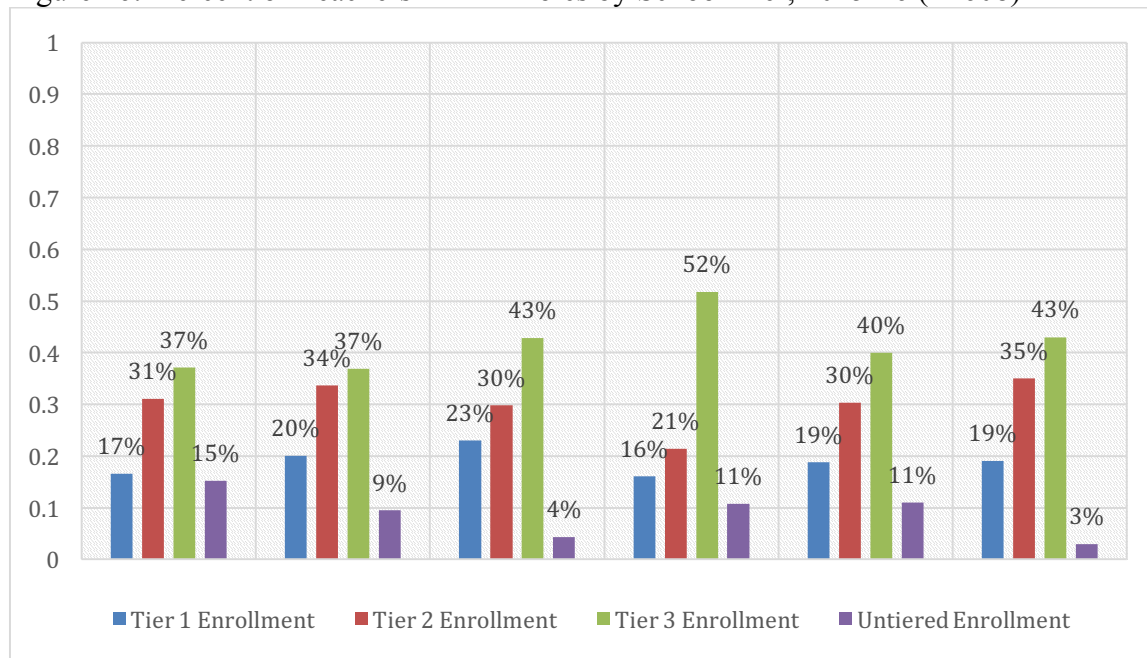
### Research question 1c: To what degree have human capital practices provided targeted support to high-need schools?

In prior years, we found significant differences across the three tiers in the degree to which teachers held expanded roles. Specifically, teachers in Tier 1 schools were overrepresented among leadership roles and those from Tier 3 were underrepresented in 2013-14. In 2014-15 and again in 2015-16, we found that the tiers were represented much more proportionately than in past years.

As shown in Figure X below, Tier 1 school teachers constitute 19% of the district population; teachers in Tier 2 schools make up 35% of the total; and teachers in Tier 3 schools compose 43% of the total. Figure X shows that Tier 1 teachers are not substantially over-represented in any role except that of Super Tutor, where they make up 23% of the group. Teachers in Tier 3 schools are proportionally represented among Super Tutors, over-represented among Teacher Facilitators (52%) and under-represented among CFs and SSFs (37% each). Teachers in Tier 2 schools are substantially under-represented among Teacher Facilitators (21%). Overall, teachers in districtwide positions (untiered, 3% total) are over-represented among teachers in PEP roles

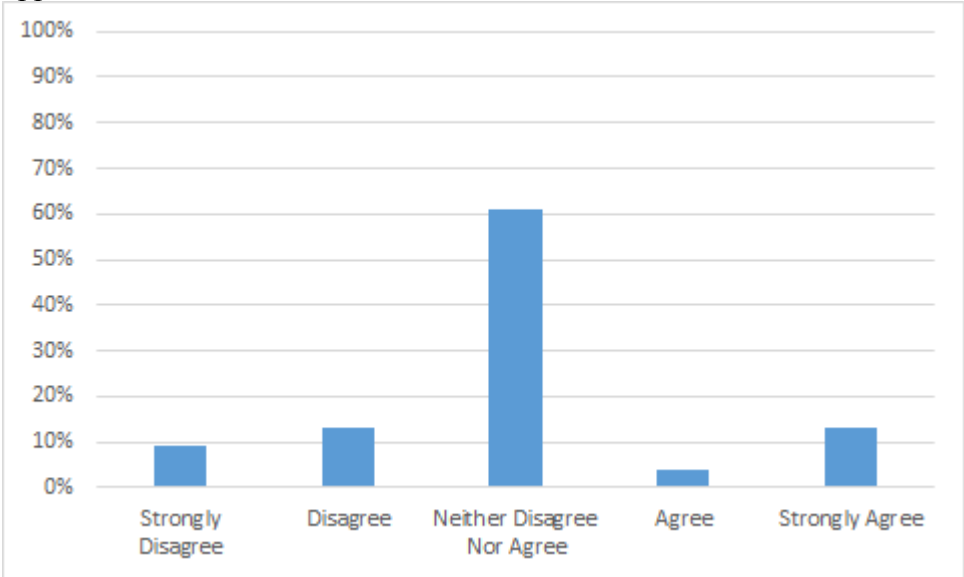
(11%). Although the distribution indicates some disproportionality by tier, overall the allocation in roles is much more equitable than in the earliest years of PEP.

Figure 16: Percent of Teachers in PEP Roles by School Tier, 2015-16 (n=608)



When we surveyed educators, they did not perceive marked disproportionality. For example, we asked school leaders about the extent to which they believe high-needs schools are specifically targeted for support through new leadership opportunities for administrators. Responses were fairly well distributed with the majority of respondents neither disagreeing or agreeing (61%); 21% disagreed (13%) or strongly disagreed (9%); and 17% agreed (4%) or strongly agreed (13%).

Figure 17. High-needs schools are specifically targeted for support through new leadership opportunities for administrators

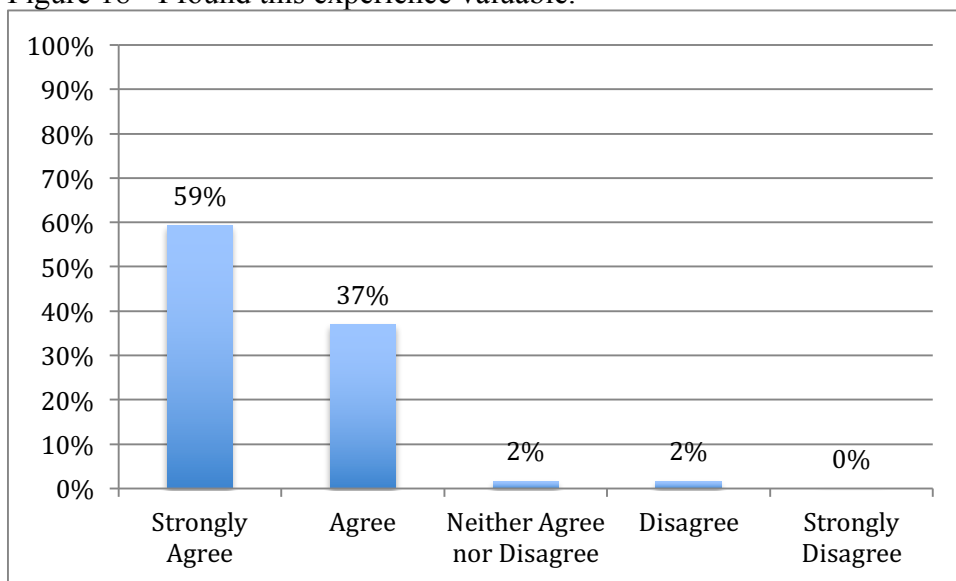


**Research question 2: How do educators view specific changes to NHPS’s human capital practices?**

**Teachers’ Views.** As in previous years, we asked educators about their views on changes to New Haven Public Schools’ human capital practices. We found that educators continue to be very positive about the roles, the professional development that they receive in the roles, and the impact of the roles on their practice.

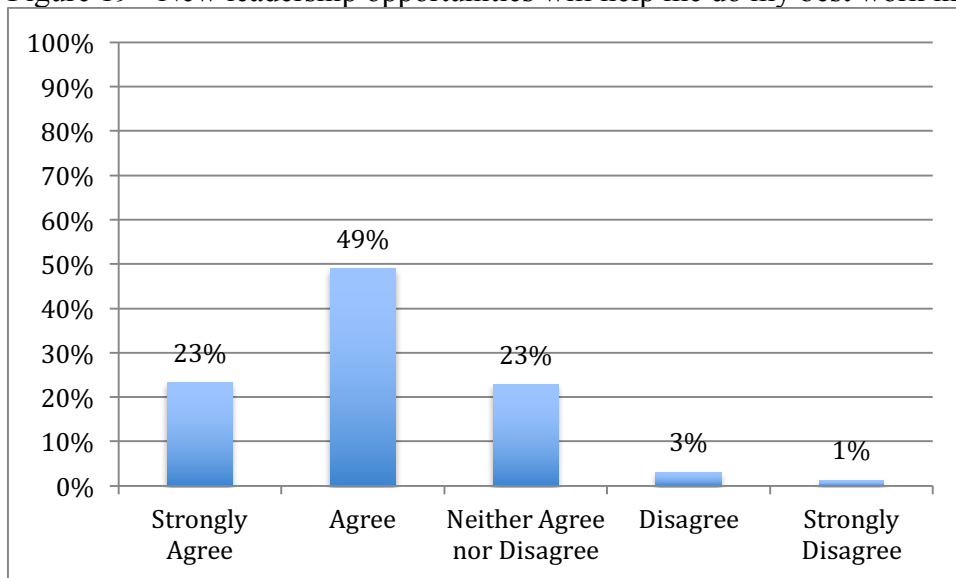
When asked whether they found their experience in the PEP role valuable, 96% of teachers surveyed agreed/strongly agreed and 0% disagreed. This finding is consistent with prior years’ findings and signals that teachers continue to find these roles rewarding and meaningful.

Figure 18 - I found this experience valuable.



When asked whether these roles help them do their best work in NHPS, nearly three-quarters (72%) of teachers agreed or strongly agreed. This is on par with last year's result (76%).

Figure 19 - New leadership opportunities will help me do my best work in NHPS



**Benefits and Challenges of the Roles.** Specific examples of the benefits of the role are found in the case study earlier in this report. In addition, we interviewed a range of teachers in roles across different settings. Teachers told us how central the roles were to their work. For example, one TF articulated the benefits of the role in this way:

Anytime I am able to interact and experience the teaching practices of my colleagues, I am enlightened with new ideas and additional strategies that I can incorporate in my own practice. Additionally, I am beginning to learn about coaching conversations and other skills that help me deal with groups of educators.

Teachers reported that the roles were extremely valuable to them as professionals. One SSF who had previously served as a Super Tutor summed up the importance of the roles to her:

I think if anyone is doing their job well in New Haven, then they're working really, really hard, and I think it's easy to feel, because you're up against so many systemic factors and issues much bigger than yourself, and a lot of challenges that it can be easy to get sort of jaded and to feel like, you know, undervalued. And I think these sort of opportunities help people feel more, validate the work that they're doing, and give them opportunities to do even more. And so I think it's really important.

A Super Tutor responded similarly, stating that working in the role “gives me a feeling of pride in my profession.”

Other teachers in roles identified specific benefits they received in the role. For example, one CF said that the district’s approach to professional development was improving, and that she was proud to participate in this shift:

I like that there is a shift in the attitude towards the PD. And that’s based from the feedback from our past professional developments. That it is more meaningful and relevant and time-worthy. So I’m happy to be a part of that shift. You can just tell that the attitude is different. It’s no longer – well, there’s a little bit of it, but it’s no longer coming in, and you’re just tired anyway, and you’re just there because you have to be there. You’re getting something from it and you’re leaving with something from it. So I’m glad that I’m a part of that shift.

Teachers who received professional development specific to their role generally reported that it was beneficial. For example, one SSF said, “I loved the trainings and loved the opportunity to work with other educators from the district.”

Finally, as foreshadowed above, teachers reported that the roles increased their collaboration with colleagues inside and outside their schools. They valued these new and enhanced relationships. For some teachers, PEP roles deepened collaboration, as one member of a facilitated group stated: “Honestly, most of our regular school meetings I feel like we do not accomplish much of anything except complaining. My work with my colleagues in my TFG is much more positive and useful.” For other teachers, the roles simply expanded the network of people they could turn to for professional advice.

Teachers also reported key challenges to the roles. Some teachers reported that their colleagues did not always accept their leadership. For example, one teacher recounted, “I was placed in a leadership role at meetings, which was difficult because my colleagues were not ready for that.”

Similarly, a Super Tutor described how she coordinated the other Super Tutors in her school. However, she ran into problems with lines of authority:

And so if a teacher was absent, then there really wasn't much accountability there, because then the kids would just join another group. So I wasn't paying them. It was like I initiated it and was sort of spearheading it, but I also am not their superior in any way.



... I couldn't really enforce the attendance policy at all, even though it was really, created a lot of stress and challenges for me.

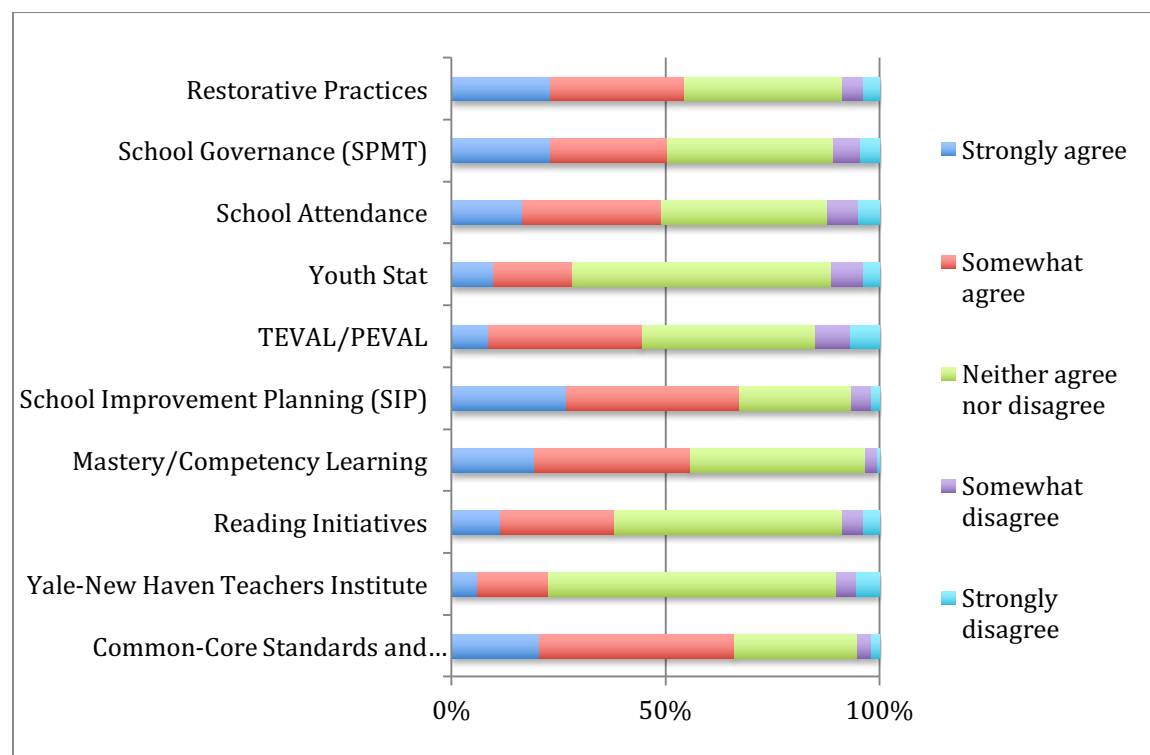
Other teachers reported that district supervisors sometimes overemphasized compliance. She stated that there was “a rigidity to attendance. Sometimes things happen and you just can’t be there. You do follow up, but it’s kind of like, you know, “Where were you?” Which I understand, because we’re a cohort and we have to work together. So I think there needs to be a little bit more fleshing out of flexibility of when you can’t be there.”

Finally, teachers in roles (e.g. TF, CF) that in some cases required them to assemble colleagues outside of school to complete work sometimes struggled to find time. One CF said that a key challenge to her work in the role was:

Lack of being able to set up enough meetings with other people to get things done. Again, I was part of a team, and we had done some pieces of it, and it was just not being able to get other people together and figure out what the pieces were.

Based on educators’ concerns that PEP was not connected to other district initiatives in the 2014-15 school year, we also asked whether PEP was related to other initiatives in NHPS. We found that more than 50% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that PEP Was related to Restorative Practices, School Governance, School Improvement Planning, Mastery Learning, and Common Core curriculum alignment. However, fewer than half of teachers perceived a relationship between the district’s evaluation systems and PEP despite the fact that PEP selection is based on evaluation scores.

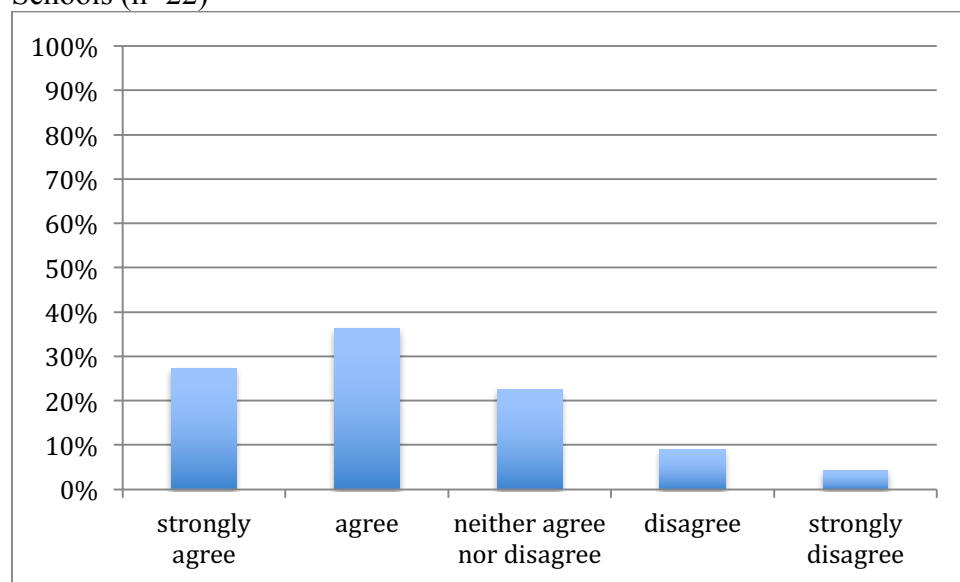
Figure 20 - To what extent is PEP related to other initiatives in New Haven Public Schools?



**School Leaders' Views.** Like teachers, school leaders voiced strong support for the value of the PEP roles. All—100%—of administrators in roles who were surveyed strongly agreed that the PEP roles were valuable to them (figure not shown).

In keeping with this result, the great majority of these administrators felt that these roles would help them do their best work in NHPS. In total, 63% of administrators agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Figure 21. New leadership opportunities will help me do my best work in the New Haven Public Schools (n=22)



***What are the benefits of the role, according to participants?***

*Strengthening Peer Relationships.* One of the most commonly cited benefits for the expanded school leadership roles this year was the opportunity to strengthen relationships with other school leaders.

Said one Mentor,

I believe that going through this process will just, will begin to enhance the relationships that I have with people now, and how I have those relationships...I think that going through this process and the more we meet with people, and read the mentor books, and read the - all those different things - I think that having all of those different kinds of thoughts and those stories and those different things in my mind will mesh with all the stuff that's already in there. And then give me a different type of intent to some of the things that happen.

As a Network Facilitator was describing the value of the peer-facilitated meetings model, she talked about the need for relationship-building at the foundation of change work:

It's been my experience that the relationships have to be built first and then the work happens. You can't - it doesn't flip. It doesn't flip. It's always an uphill battle, so it takes

time to build that relationships piece and then we move forward. And so with the groups of colleagues, some of the people who I hadn't really known very well, you know creating - having a group and creating relationships among that group is starting to build the trust and the safety.

The Community of Practice and the facilitated conversations allowed time and space for relationship-building. She continued, describing the need for more of these opportunities. "I was amazed at how quickly [relationships] happened. So again, that told me that people were really hungry for this kind of thing."

*Building Leadership Capacity to Build Teacher Capacity.* Many school leaders in expanded roles framed the benefits of the role in terms of increasing their own leadership capacity to build teacher capacity within their schools. As one Mentor stated, "I think that the things that they're providing training to us on through the work with Kerry will help me not only in my relationship with whoever they decide is my mentee, but also in the development of teachers within the building that want to become either teacher-leaders or might have aspirations to become an administrator."

Another Mentor described her increased listening skills as critical to building capacity in her building. As she described the positive feedback she has received this year from her teachers, she explained "I think [being a Mentor] made me a better listener. Because I became aware last year how often, when people will come to me with something they are struggling with, I want to help them. I want to fix it for them. It's the parent in me....I have to keep my mouth shut and just listen more, which I think was great professional development for me."

*Formalizing Cross-Generational Stewardship.* Several Mentors and Coaches spoke about their decision to apply for expanded roles as an extension of their sense of duty for paying forward the care given to them as new administrators. One Mentor described her desire to serve as in the role in terms of stewardship of the system.

It just was like a natural progression that as new folks join the ranks, you kind of help the one behind you - because someone in front of you helped you. So I think that that's something that was already informally happening. This is just a formalized process because the folks that mentored me were not a part of this program.

Another Mentor described a similar system and spoke about the benefits of opportunities to learn how to best carry out the mentoring she was already doing. After describing several scenarios of becoming an informal mentor for colleagues, she stated,

When the descriptions [of the expanded leadership roles] came out, I said, 'Well, let me actually get trained, so to speak, to do this, as opposed to it just being what I think it's supposed to be - to see what's actually out there.' So I will continue doing what I do, but then actually have some, maybe, research behind it or experiences of other people. Some kind of do's and don'ts.

In this case, the Mentor was serving in several informal mentoring roles with up-and-coming leaders because of an alignment between a need within the system and her existing skills and experience. Later in the interview, she spoke about the power of being formally and officially appointed as a Mentor by NHPS as lending weight to the importance of this work.

### ***What are the challenges of the role, according to participants?***

*Time to Enact the Expanded Roles.* Every school leader who participated in our data collection spoke of how precious time is and the constraints to adding additional tasks to already-full schedules. Mentors and Coaches both spoke about the difficulty in connecting with their Mentee or Coachee on their own time, which diluted their ability to extend professional development beyond their own Community of Practice time. Although most school leaders framed this lack of time as understandable, given the demands on their colleagues' time, they also acknowledged time as a major challenge to the work.

School leaders were not only pressed to make time in their own schedules - many also spoke about the need for central office to prioritize time for their professional development through these roles. One Network Facilitator spoke about the need to afford sufficient time to allow facilitated conversations to achieve the depth necessary for learning to happen. "I think that if we are going to continue this in the future, it really needs to be not just a priority, but it needs to be given the time needed in order for it to be done well." The desire for more time sponsored by the district was widespread in school leader critiques.

Others mentioned wanting to see more time devoted to using the strategies they learned in the Communities of Practice in already-scheduled professional development opportunities. While this aligns naturally with the goals of the Network Facilitator role, Coaches also spoke about how they could use their skills within other district-organized learning opportunities. For example, one Coach described seeing a role for Coaches in leading some of the Common Core professional development work. "It just seems like a natural fit with what we are being trained to do with the people we are coaching." The expansion, however, would require time during district meetings to avoid duplicating work or "just piling on more" for school leaders.

*Limited District Support to Enact the Roles.* Network Facilitators, in particular, were constrained in their ability to use their professional skills and learning from the Community of Practice. Most indicated that they were prevented from using their new facilitation skills for much of the year, as central office did not ask them to facilitate meetings. As one Network Facilitator described this year, "You put in so much time into that Community of Practice with Kerry. And so - it's like we are dressed up and no place to go!" Later, she commented that their work facilitating meetings "shouldn't be a one and done...That's my one concern: it feels like it's just, you know, surface level conversation when really people are hungry for the depth."

Many of the school leaders in expanded roles indicated that they believed central office administrators might support the enactment of their roles more if they better understood what that entailed. As one Network Facilitator stated, "I think it is a work in progress for the district to embrace [us]." Another stated "I don't know how much the support folks [in central office] really understand what the work is [of Network Facilitators] and how powerful it could be and why it needs the time it needs and that it shouldn't just be an add on...I think that's just because they don't understand. Because they haven't experienced it." A few individuals suggested bringing more central office leaders into the Communities of Practice to help them understand the skills they have and one person even suggested that Kerry work with central office leaders to

develop their own professional learning about PEP roles in a separate, fourth Community of Practice.

*Lack of Coherence with Other Initiatives.* Some of the school leaders spoke about the difficulty of enacting newly expanded leadership roles alongside other initiatives and the lack of sufficient support in prioritizing multiple demands from the district. A Network Facilitator connected this lack of clarity to their desire to be intentional in how they represent themselves and their respect for their colleagues.

You know, these are new things and we are always being bombarded with new initiatives. So if we are going to put something out there - really, it's the well-thought out. And especially if our reputations and our colleagues' reputations are on the line and we don't want to do something, you know, halfway. We want to - you know? Represent our worth.

This sentiment was echoed by others. Their concern was not only about the time and intentionality behind well-crafted changes implemented through PEP, but also about the lack of clarity about how new expanded roles fit into existing district structures, such as professional development.

*Logistics.* Lastly, there was widespread confusion among school leaders during the transition from 2014-15 to 2015-16 in the continuation of expanded leadership roles for individuals, despite there being a formal application process.

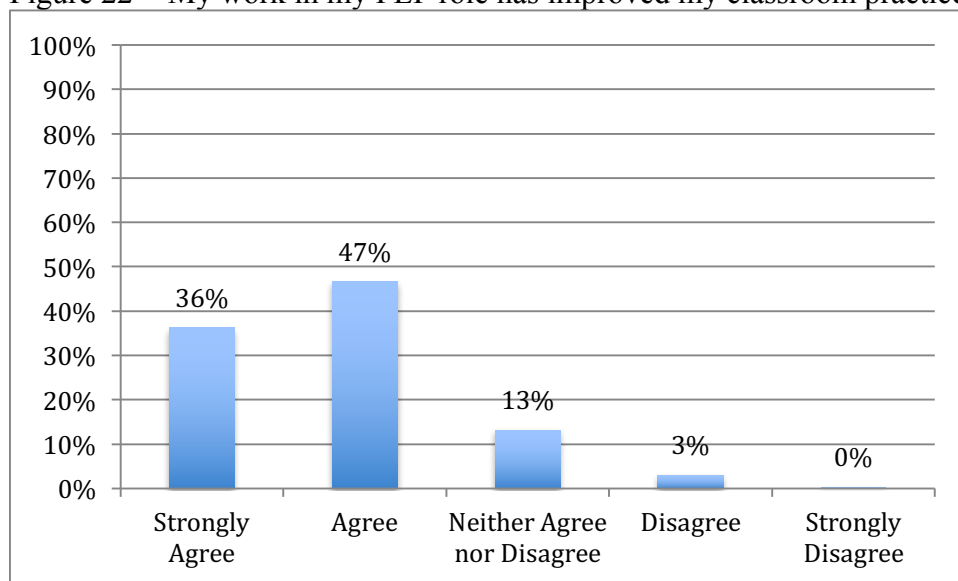
### **Research question 3: Did student performance improve after pep implementation?**

As in last year's report, we include a discussion of the problems with estimating PEP's direct causal impact on student development in Appendix A. Many school leaders in expanded roles, in particular, spoke about the point of intervention for their work as being their colleagues, with indirect effects on teachers and schools. As one school leader in an expanded role stated, "It wasn't the primary reason, but it turned out to be a nice byproduct - bringing it back to the schools." Given these limitations, we report here on participants' perceptions of impact on their practice and student performance.

#### **Effects on Teachers' Instructional Practice, Collaboration, and Student Performance**

*Effect on Instructional Practice.* These roles are intended to improve classroom practice. When asked whether this has occurred, 83% of teachers survey agreed/strongly agreed with this statement, including 93% of teacher facilitators and 90% of curriculum facilitators.

Figure 22 - My work in my PEP role has improved my classroom practice



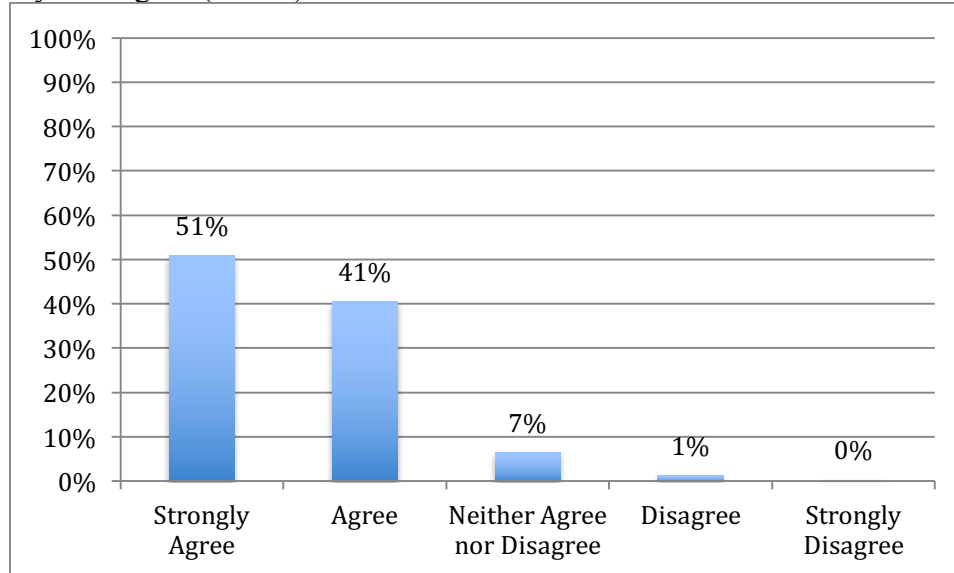
How has this occurred? Teachers described specific benefits. For example, one Curriculum Facilitator said, “I bring back many engaging, insightful, creative lessons and strategies to my class. When working with teachers from other schools, we share experiences and ideas. I often try what they have in my own classroom, often times with great success.

Another curriculum facilitator said that holding the role, “kept me on my toes for current pedagogical trends and to keep up with my content area.”

Likewise, a Teacher Facilitator described how this work might affect teachers’ practice in this way. “The group was able to use protocols to address authentic teacher dilemmas and share out best practices using success protocols. The group also looked at various school wide dilemmas and came up with possible solutions to address the dilemmas.”

***Effect on collaboration.*** Some of the roles, Teacher Facilitator and Curriculum Facilitator in particular, are expected to improve practice through enhancing colleagues’ collaboration and exchange of ideas. To this end, 92% of teachers surveyed agreed/strongly agreed that their work in their role had improved collaboration with their colleagues. Almost all-- 97% of curriculum facilitators and 93% of teacher facilitators—responded in the affirmative to this statement.

Figure 23 - My work as an "ROLE" has improved my collaboration with my colleagues (n=225)

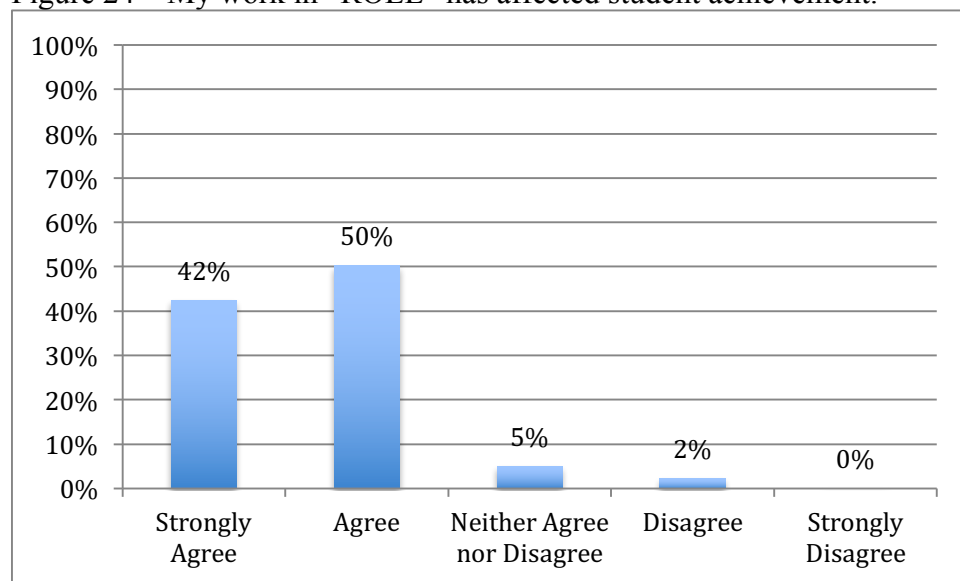


Teachers' qualitative statements echoed these survey results. For example, one teacher stated, "My colleagues are a vast and wonderful source of "tried-and-true" curriculum." Another teacher said, "I have seen my colleagues more and have had more opportunity to have professional discourse with them" due to the role.

Another teacher reported that being placed in the SSF role facilitated her collaboration with another SSF. Together, they "helped revitalize our Climate Team, which improved collaboration."

***Effects on student success/achievement.*** Lastly, we turn to the effects of the role on student achievement. As noted in the appendix, it is difficult to isolate the impact of PEP or particular roles on student performance. However, teachers in PEP roles report that these roles are improving student performance. Overall, 92% of all teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the roles affected student achievement. Almost all-- 99% of student support facilitators, 92% of teacher facilitators, and 98% of super tutors—responded affirmatively to this statement.

Figure 24—My work in “ROLE” has affected student achievement.



What are the mechanisms through which these roles affect student performance? In each role, the mechanism through which the role could improve student performance is slightly different. For example, one SSF described how her work in this role affects the learning of the students with whom they work: “Families were connected with community services, students received in school supports to address needs; this allowed students to spend more time in their classes and learning.” Another SSF described the intermediate steps towards affecting student performance, in this case focusing on student behavior: “These students are progressing and have been managing their emotions better and more consistently in the classroom setting. They are also communicating conflicts and concerns more appropriately (instead of physically fighting). However, there is still more work to be done, as there is still some inconsistency among some students.” Another SSF provided quantitative evidence for progress on these intermediary measures: “80% of the students with Action Plans made progress and showed behavioral improvements.”

Super Tutors arguably have the most direct effect on student performance. Here, the theory of action is that a teacher working with a small group of students can identify students’ needs and tailor her instruction accordingly. Without distractions, students may also be able to learn material more effectively. To this end, one teacher reported that this was, indeed, the way she saw her tutoring group operating: “As a teacher working with a smaller group with less interruptions, there is more time for smaller group work or even one on one time. Hence, students have increased in their overall comprehension as well as in math skill.”

STs described concrete ways in which their work in their role led to increased student performance. For example, one ST reported that her ST group was composed of “lower achieving students and am happy to say that I did not have a single student fail my class this year.” A second ST made a similar statement: “[N]ot one kid failed my class and two moved into honors from college for next year.”



STs also reported substantial growth among higher-achieving students. For example, a science teacher who served as a ST recounted:

I tutored AP Chemistry students who were either taking AP classes for the first time or AP Science for the first time as well as AP chemistry students who took the class without taking regular chemistry first. These students significantly improved their performance on AP style questions from the beginning of the year to the end, showing a growth of 30 percentage points on their MC exams and 53 percentage points on their AP free response questions.

Teacher Facilitators articulated a more elaborate theory of action through which their role affected student learning. One TF stated, “You have to start with the teachers to impact the students. There is kind of that pipeline.” Another TF stated, “This experience became most valuable in my own classroom practice.” Many TFs echoed these comments, such as one teacher who stated, “Teachers were able to bring real issues to the table to help them reflect and improve their practice. This in turn helped the students because teachers were more confident in their teaching.”

Curriculum Facilitators reported that their work led to stronger curriculum, which could then bolster student learning.

For example, one curriculum facilitator stated:

I think we’ve been able to provide for, like for teachers, what their guidelines for what they need to be teaching in any course. You know, like you can go to the geometry. You can go to the math drive and look at the curriculum that has been created there, and the curriculum that is there for the geometry course was created by curriculum facilitators. The exams, again, that are being created are rooted in that curriculum, and were created by the curriculum facilitators. So the exams that are being given across the district were created by these curriculum facilitators, as opposed to by a coach or somebody in the math department.

She continued, “I know it has an effect on how we teach in this building” and “I know that based on what I’m teaching from that curriculum I created the students are learning.”

### **Effects on Leaders’ Practice and Students’ Performance**

***Effects on Instructional Leadership.*** School leaders in expanded roles report that their professional learning with Kerry Lord has improved their instructional leadership. Coaches spoke about applying a coaching mindset to their work as instructional leaders within their buildings. For example, one Coach began using a coaching framework for conducting post-observation feedback sessions for teacher evaluation. She shared her new approach with teachers before conducting the second round of teacher observations this year. She stated that this framing helped shift the conversations to focus more on teacher development than previously. This school leader attributed the change in how she approaches teacher evaluation directly to the skills and mindset learned in her Coach Community of Practice sessions.

Mentors also reported shifts in their approaches to instructional leadership with teachers in their buildings. The vast majority of Mentors reported using new listening and empowering skills in conversations across an array of situations to prompt teachers to come up with their own solutions. Kerry Lord taught Mentors to listen carefully to Mentees and guide Mentees to solve their own problems. This approach was positioned as an alternative to telling Mentees what to do. Many mentors described seeing the benefits of empowering Mentees to explore their own thinking and devise solutions last year; consequently, they decided to begin using this approach with colleagues in other settings, including their own buildings. As one Mentor described this year, “It’s amazing how once you start really listening and helping people see that they know [what to do] on their own, it changes how you work with *everyone!*” Several Mentors voiced that they wish they had been trained to support their staff with these strategies while learning to become principals.

Finally, Network Facilitators also report that their professional learning sessions have affected their work with teachers. For example, one Network Facilitator reported that she is providing a small group of teachers with instruction on how to use protocols to facilitate faculty conversations. She plans to conduct all professional development in her school in 2016-17 using the facilitation model and protocols from her Network Facilitator sessions.

***Effects on Leadership Practice.*** School leaders in expanded roles report that their professional learning has improved their ability to efficiently and productively engage teachers in school leadership activities. Network Facilitators, in particular, transferred tools they learned for leading efficient, goal-oriented discussion to several spaces within their buildings. Several Network Facilitators shared examples of introducing the protocols they learned from Kerry Lord to staff meetings to structure time, communications, and expectations about end results. One Network Facilitator described using the protocols to facilitate a difficult discussion with teachers in two grade teams that were struggling to communicate with each other this year. Colleagues in the Network Facilitator Community of Practice helped her to design the session and practice responses to possible challenges to using the protocol. She reports that this work was invaluable. She attributes the teachers’ ability to voice their frustrations in ways that were both cathartic and yet still productive for moving forward towards resolution to the use of these structured protocols. As another Network Facilitator summarized, “when you work in a group, you remember how smart people are. When you allow people to speak who normally don’t, you’re reminded that the answers *are* in the people there.”

Another Network Facilitator spoke about using design thinking and tools in the Community of Practice’s assigned textbook to help her make faculty meetings more efficient. She set time with her leadership team to intentionally surface the purpose of the meeting and design activities that would help all teachers to participate. “How will we do this with teachers?” they asked. “We really needed to focus on voice – how do we have this meeting with teachers, all of whom care about this topic, but usually there are a few voices who end up taking over.” She reported that many teachers have become re-engaged and she has continued the new process for designing and managing staff meetings. Similarly, a Coach described using coaching norms and protocols she learned with Kerry Lord to structure expectations for setting goals in staff meetings and focusing time on helping teachers figure out how to meet their own stated goals; she admitted this was a shift from using staff meetings to share information didactically.

School leaders in expanded roles report using the skills and strategies they learning in Communities of Practice to support leadership development within their buildings. Several school leaders have begun sharing new leadership practices and tools from their Communities of Practice with other leaders within their building. One Coach mentioned how she has shared coaching strategies she learned in the Coach Community of Practice with members of her leadership team to shape how they work with teachers within their departments. She specifically mentioned introducing them to the “ladders of inference” tool supplied by Kerry Lord to shift how they ask teachers to think about why they are encountering problems, rather than providing solutions that may or may not be implemented by teachers. A Network Facilitator said he taught a few of the protocols to his leadership team and they have been using them in leadership team meetings with great success this year.

***Effects on Collaboration.*** Network Facilitators spoke about the positive feedback they received from colleagues after facilitating collaborative peer learning. “My colleagues appreciate having a facilitator to maximize the time allotted for dialogue or discussion of a particular topic,” reported one Network Facilitator. Another stated, “We worked together as a team to find ways to move our work forward personally, at our schools and in the district...Our work together as facilitators gave me an opportunity to learn from my colleagues and broaden my perspective. Additionally, providing structured and supportive time to work as colleagues is beneficial to improving our practices.” One of the Network Facilitators has worked specifically with the Teacher Facilitators in her building to develop their own facilitation skills, based on her learning with colleagues in the Community of Practice.

***Effects on Student Performance.*** The expanded roles for school leaders are not designed to directly impact student learning; rather, they are intended to increase the opportunities for educators to participate in high quality professional learning, which may in turn improve their practice. Some school leaders in expanded roles have started using skills and strategies from professional learning this year to support teaching practices with students in their buildings. One Network Facilitator introduced protocols learned in the Community of Practice to town hall meetings with students. He shared that, “It hasn’t taken hold totally, but I’m started to hear, like, ‘Is this the same protocol that we used at...’ And I’m like, ‘Yes.’” Another Network Facilitator shared a plan for training teachers in her building on several protocols for scaffolding classroom conversations and empowering student discussion about curriculum.

Several Mentors discussed how they use strategies they have practiced with their peers in their Community of Practice in conversations with others they mentor, including students.

Coaches also reported ways in which their expanded roles have improved their interactions supporting students. One coach reported that she is now “coaching students to articulate problems and come up with their own solutions,” which scaffolds student self-efficacy. Another coach explained that “using questions instead of statements with students provides a wealth of information about what students are thinking and feeling about any given situation. On many occasions the conversations with students lead to changes in policy or procedures that are in place at our school.”

## Summary

On the whole, the results from 2015-16 are very consistent with those from prior years: teachers and leaders find PEP roles valuable and report that their work in these roles improves their practice. Teachers report that their roles affect student performance and both teachers and leaders state that the roles enhance their collaboration with their colleagues and have broadened their professional networks. Further, leaders voice resounding support for the professional development they have received through the PEP/TIF grant and recommend it be expanded to colleagues who do not hold PEP roles. At the same time, only about half of teachers and leaders see a connection between their PEP roles and their performance evaluations.

## Recommendations

Based on these findings, we recommend the following:

1. **Continue to support the expanded roles in New Haven Public Schools.** Teachers and school leaders report extensive benefits of the role in terms of their collaboration, instructional or leadership practice, and student learning.
2. **Make the assignments of roles much earlier:** We are finding that it has taken quite a while for roles to begin to fully function. It would be ideal to assign roles as early as possible so that people in the roles can implement them immediately and supervisors can support them accordingly. This is especially important for roles, including mentor, coach, and teacher facilitator, that involve working with other colleagues. By assigning these roles early, role holders are provided the time to set up the role and establish relationships with colleagues who are central to the roles.
3. **Consider the organizational/individual balance for each role:** The roles in New Haven appear to walk a fine balance between serving organizational goals and individual needs. This tension has become evident in the case of Network Facilitators, for example. It would be helpful to consider this balance before the next year of PEP launches. How should each role serve individual needs? How should it serve organizational needs? It is reasonable to expect that roles should do both and making this balance more explicit at the outset may reduce tensions as teachers and administrators engage further with the roles.
4. **Consider making expectations for support for role more explicit:** Many PEP roles require administrator support to function effectively. This is true for both teacher roles and administrator roles. Consider making the district's expectations regarding administrator support for these roles more explicit. As shown in the data and our case study in particular, sites where administrators actively support and integrate PEP roles appear to derive more benefits from them.

## APPENDIX A

### **Problems With Estimating PEP's Impact on Student Achievement** **Morgaen Donaldson and Kimberly LeChasseur, University of Connecticut**

By impact, we mean the causal effect of a program, like PEP, on a desired outcome, like student achievement. To measure impact, we need to be able to isolate whether the program increased student performance (or other outcomes). For example, if a reading intervention is randomly assigned to a group of students, the growth in achievement scores (the difference between post-test and pre-test) of students receiving the treatment can be compared to the growth in achievement scores of students not receiving the treatment (the control group). One key requirement here is that treatment and control groups are randomly assigned; the only difference between members of the treatment and control groups should be the group that they are assigned to. The second key requirement is that no other interventions occur simultaneously. If both these requirements are met, an estimate of the *impact* of the intervention on the key outcome can be calculated. This inference of impact is strengthened if the intervention is very close to the outcome it seeks to change (e.g. a reading intervention seeking to improve students' reading scores as opposed to a change in school scheduling seeking to improve students' reading scores).

It is difficult to isolate the impact of a holistic, broad program like PEP on student achievement for three main reasons.

**First, NHPS implemented PEP district-wide.** PEP was implemented district-wide and there is thus no control group. In addition, educators were selected for roles in a non-random fashion and the students/educators with whom these role-holders work (e.g. Super Tutors' students, Mentors' mentees) were also selected non-randomly.

**Second, NHPS implemented PEP simultaneously with several other initiatives.** PEP was implemented alongside several other reforms (e.g. Yale initiative) so any global estimate of growth (or loss) on a particular outcome could not be attributed solely to PEP.

**Third, PEP is a holistic intervention at the level of the teacher and school leader.** The theory of action suggests that PEP will change adult behaviors, which in turn will improve student performance. Implicit in this theory of action is the assumption that it will take time for adult behaviors to change in ways that are reflected in student performance data. New roles have been in effect for at most two school years, so we might be able to begin to see effects for these particular roles on the students with which those educators work, but broad effects of the program are not likely to be detectable yet. It is also important to keep in mind that adults operate within school settings, which differ from each other and likely influence how individual teachers and school leaders learn and enact these new roles. The PEP "intervention" is in most respects relatively distant from student performance, which allows more chance for context to shape the impact than with an intervention more proximal to student outcomes.

Additionally, the district has shifted to new student assessments, limiting the potential to compare student test scores over long lengths of time. This does not obviate the possibility of estimating impact, it just requires us to think creatively about how we identify valid and reliable

pre- and post-assessments that are aligned to each other and allow us to make sound judgments about impact.